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"Reckon I'd better travel," said Dandy Jim. "You've got too many aithquakes round hyer fur me."

OVERLAND KIT; OR, THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

Author of "Witches of New York," "Wolf Demon," "White Witch," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN FROM RED DOG.

"What's the matter, Dick?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"Oh, nothing; only a little nervous attack, that's all," he replied, recovering himself with a great effort.

Talbot sat at the door, while Jinnie had her back to it, so that she had not noticed the entrance of the stranger.

"Good-evenin', Miss Jinnie," said Bill, the driver, advancing to the girl. Mr. Rennet and Bernice followed; both of them had seen so many strange sights in their western journey, that they were not much surprised when Bill introduced Jinnie as the hotel owner.

"I'll do the best I can for you, Miss," said Jinnie, politely, when she learned that it was the intention of the strangers to remain with her for a week or so.

"But, we're pretty well crowded; we haven't got many rooms, but I reckon I'll be able to fix you, someway."

"You can have my room, Jinnie," Talbot said; his head down, resting on his arms, which were laid upon the table, and thus hiding his features from view.

Bernice and the old lawyer looked at Talbot in astonishment, his appearance was so different from the rest of the inmates of the saloon.

"But, where will you go, Dick?" asked Jinnie, anxiously.

"Oh, anywhere; I'll get along well enough," Dick replied, never raising his head from the table.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," Bernice said, in the low, sweet, lady-like voice, that was such a contrast to the clear, ringing tones of Jinnie.

Talbot shivered when the tones of Bernice's voice fell on his ears, as though an icy wind, fresh from the north, had blown full upon him.

"This way, Miss; I'll show you to your room at once; and you, sir," said Jinnie, addressing the old lawyer, "I'll have to put you in the room with Bill, here. It's the best I can do."

"You'll be as snug as a pint of bourbon in a miner's gullet, old hoss!" Bill exclaimed, slapping Rennet familiarly on the back, with his huge paw.

"Say, I hope you allers keep your own side of the bed, 'cos when I bunk in with strangers, I allers goes to bed with spurs on."

"Yes, yes, I see—quite a joke," said the old lawyer, affecting to enjoy the remark of the facetious stage-driver, though, in his heart, he cursed the fellow's insolence.

As Bernice passed by Bill, following Jinnie, she said, quickly:

"What is the name of that gentleman in black?" indicating Talbot, as she spoke.

"Injun Dick!"

"Indian Dick?" Bernice exclaimed, in amazement at the strange appellation.

"Yes, sir! Injun Dick Talbot. He's the big shanghai round this ranch."

Without further words, Bernice left the room, following Jinnie and the old lawyer. She had taken a sudden and strange interest in the stranger, whose voice alone she had heard; whose face she had not seen.

Bernice found that the room assigned to her was in the front of the building and looked out upon the only street of which Spur City could boast.

It was small, plainly-furnished, but fitted up neatly and tastily. A woman's hand, though, was plainly evident in the simple adornments.

In the silence of the little room, Bernice pondered first on the man who bore the strange name of "Injun Dick," and then upon the masked horsemen who had pronounced her name at the first glance.

"Something tells me that here in this place I shall find what I seek," she murmured, as she prepared to disrobe for bed.

Hardly had she commenced to undress, when a terrible series of yells, coming from the saloon below, fell upon her ears. She paused to listen.

After Jinnie and the two strangers left the saloon, Talbot raised his head and looked around him. His face was pale as the face of the dead; great drops of sweat stood like orient pearls upon his white forehead, which the broad-brimmed slouch hat had protected from the hot sun-kiss, that had bronzed the rest of his face.

A strange expression was upon his usually calm features. What had so excited Injun Dick, who had been known to face a dozen angry men, with brandishing weapons in their hands, with a smile upon his lip and a biting taunt upon his tongue?

"I must get out of this," he murmured, restlessly; "the mountain canon and the shelter of the pines must be my home till this woman is far from here! How beautiful she is. For the sake of a woman like her, I'd walk barefoot over burning coals;

but I must fly from her. I feel that she will bring me ill-luck; I must get out—leave her!"

Talbot arose from his seat and approached the bar.

"Give me some whisky," he said.

The Chinaman handed down the bottle in astonishment. He had never known Talbot to call for raw spirits before.

Dick filled a glass brimming full and drank it off as if it had been so much water.

"The liquor seems to have lost its strength," he murmured, an ugly look in his restless dark eyes. "How much, heathen?"

"Six bites," replied Ah Ling.

Talbot tossed the money upon the counter and turned to leave the saloon. He longed for the fresh air that, laden with the balm of the pine, swept from the white peaks down along the river valley.

The potent spirits had lost their power. The nervous action of the brain, roused in to being, defied the fumes of the whisky to overcome it. Yet Talbot would fain have stilled the busy thoughts that were working in his brain.

As Talbot turned, a burly, black-bearded fellow, gigantic in size, clad in a ragged, red-flannel shirt, butternut-colored breeches stuck into huge boots, and a high-crowned felt hat, rolled, with an unsteady motion, into the saloon. The stranger was covered with yellow mud from head to foot, as if he had lain down and taken a bath in the middle of the street. A belt strapped around his waist supported two revolvers and a huge bowie-knife.

After the stranger got fairly into the saloon, he steadied himself and looked around him with an air of drunken gravity. All eyes of course were fixed upon him.

"I'm the man—from-Red-Dog, he, wake snakes an' come at me! yar-who-oo-o!" and he indulged in a prolonged yell.

It was the drunken yell of the representative from Red Dog that had disturbed Bernice in her chamber above.

After delivering his defiance, the stranger looked around him.

The inmates of the saloon naturally glanced toward Talbot, who stood leaning on the bar, an evil look in his eyes; he understood to whom the defiance was directed, but made no reply.

"What's the man called Injun Dick—the feller that wears kid gloves an' store clothes?" howled the stranger. "Let him step out an' look at me! I kin frighten him into a grease-spot!"

"My name is Dandy Jim from Red Dog!"

Then the stranger executed a war-dance in the center of the saloon.

"Set 'em up, ag'in! Come an' see me! Yar-who-oo-o!" Again the stranger yelled with all the strength of his powerful lungs.

With a quick step, but a calm face, Talbot strode forward and confronted the Red-Dogite.

"See here, my friend, you had better go home and go to bed; that's the best place for you," he said, quietly.

"Halloo, Tom Thumb! how are ye?" exclaimed the red-shirted stranger in sarcasm.

"Haden't you better go home? Does your mother know yer out? Stand away, sonny, or I'll blow at yer an' knock yer over. I want ter see Injun Dick! I'm the man—from-Red-Dog! I'm part sea-lion, an' the rest on me is grizzly b'ar. I kin outrun, outdrink, or chew up any man in the Reese valley! Peel an' go fur me! I'm yer antelope!"

And again the stranger executed a war-dance around the center of the room, accompanied by a series of yells that would have done credit to a Pawnee Indian.

The actions of the giant were ridiculously funny, despite his warlike intentions.

"See here, now, you've cavorted round here long enough; stop your noise, or I'll put you out," Talbot said, laughing at the antics of the whisky-soaked miner, in spite of his efforts to appear grave.

"You put me out? You?" asked the miner, balancing himself unsteadily upon his legs.

"Why, I kin eat you, I kin! Maybe you think I've listed too much benzine? I kin just clean out this hull ranche, I kin! Who are you, anyway?"

"My name is Dick Talbot."

"You're my antelope!" cried the miner, drawing a revolver from his belt. "I been huntin' you!"

But, before the giant could use his weapon, there was a quick movement on the part of Injun Dick. His right arm drew back and shot out, sudden and unexpected as the flash of the lightning; a sharp, whip-like crack resounded through the room. It was the ironlike knuckles of Dick striking on the bloated face of the miner.

With a howl of pain and rage combined, the giant went over backward, against the door of the saloon; on his left cheek, under his eye, was a terrible gash, nearly two inches long, as clean a cut as though the cheek had been slit by a knife. It was the mark of Injun Dick's terrific blow.

The man-from-Red-Dog reclined against the door, and looked around him with a stupefied air. The blow had been so sudden and terrible in its force, that it was plain that he did not realize what had occurred.

"A right peart aithquake; beats Red Dog all holler," he exclaimed. "Did it knock anybody else down?"

Then his eyes fell upon Talbot, who, with leveled revolver, stood in the center of the saloon.

"Halloo! what 'er 'bout?" the miner cried; "turn that 'other way."

"You cowardly hound! You come here expressly to pick a quarrel, and now you want to back out of it," Talbot said, in contempt.

Dandy Jim—so the miner was called—felt of the terrible wound in his cheek, from which the blood was slowly trickling, and suddenly realized what had happened.

"See hyer, give a man a chance. I kin chaw you up with a fair show." The giant slowly rose to his feet. "You put down your we'pons an' I'll put down mine. We kin go outside an' settle it."

"If you haven't got enough, there's more where the first come from," Talbot said, significantly.

The two gave up their weapons, and, followed by the crowd, adjourned to the street outside the saloon.

Jinnie had re-entered the room, attracted by the noise. Her face was pale, and there was an anxious look upon her features, as she stood at the window and beheld Talbot in the moonlight, stripping off his coat, preparing to encounter the giant that towered above him.

CHAPTER V.

THE FACE IN THE WINDOW.

THERE was a dry spot of ground, some thirty feet square, in front of the Eldorado, which had not been cut up into ruts by the wagon-wheels.

The bright rays of the full moon shining down upon it, made it as light as day.

All in the saloon had gathered in a circle in front of it. Within the circle stood the two gladiators, completing their preparations for the contest.

The man-from-Red-Dog was soon ready; he dashed his old hat upon the ground; rolled up the torn sleeves of his red shirt, displaying his brawny arms, that, like his face, were tanned to the color of leather by the hot sun in the mountain gulches. His left cheek was swollen terribly, where Talbot's knuckles had left their mark. The giant was not a handsome man, at any time, and the ugly wound did not improve his looks. The proof he had already received of Talbot's prowess had opened his eyes to the extent of the task he had undertaken in confronting Injun Dick, and he was not disposed to underrate his antagonist.

Slowly, Talbot prepared for the encounter. He cast aside the neat black coat and hat; rolled up the sleeves of his ruffled white shirt—he wore no vest—as carelessly as though he was going to wash his hands, instead of facing a bully, almost twice his size.

As Talbot bared his arms to the shoulder—the arms that were white and fair as those of a beautiful woman—the giant saw the firm play of the steel-like muscles, that stood out like bunches of knotted wire under the smooth, silk-like skin. If the shirt had been stripped from the back of Injun Dick, the sight of the body of his foe would have still further astonished "The man-from-Red-Dog." He would have seen that Talbot was all bone and muscle, not an ounce of useless fat upon the wiry, sinewy form. The breadth of the shoulders and the knotted muscles that lay there beneath the silken skin, would have told him whence came the strength that sent forth Injun Dick's sledge-hammer blows.

"Look hyer! don't be all night," growled the miner, who began to have a nervous desire to see the thing through.

"Got any friends fur to carry yer home, Goliah?" asked Ginger Bill, with a grin; thus politely intimating that the Red-Dogite would be unable to walk after the affair was settled.

A chuckle went round the motley crowd at the humor of the stage-driver. Besides, the sympathy of the bystanders was almost entirely on the side of the smaller man.

After rolling up his sleeves, Talbot took his handkerchief from his pocket and tied it around his waist. As he tightened the knot of the handkerchief, he happened to glance toward the house. There was a little opening in the crowd, so his view was not obstructed. He saw the pale and anxious face of Jinnie pressed against the window-pane.

A quiet smile of confidence was on Talbot's features, and a bright light shone in his dark eyes as he glanced at the girl's face. Then, some strange, subtle instinct caused him to look upward. Why, he could not tell; but a sight met his eyes that made the blood run cold in his veins. Bernice, the "heart-woman," had been attracted by the noise under her window, and was looking out upon the crowd.

As Bernice's eyes rested upon Talbot's face, a strange expression came over her features. Fixed and rigid as a statue, her soul staring through her great blue eyes, she looked upon the scene below.

A single glance Talbot gave. He saw that she had seen the face that in the saloon, he had succeeded in hiding from her.

A stifled groan came from his lips; he raised his hands to his throat as though he was choking; then rocked for a second unsteadily on his feet, and then, with a deep groan of anguish, fell forward on his face senseless. The groan was answered by a stifled gasp of anguish from Bernice's lips; yet still, with a face pale with agony, she pressed her temples against the window-pane.

The rough crowd had not noticed the glance of Injun Dick directed at the window; had not heard the sigh of anguish that had been wrung from Bernice's overwrought heart.

At Talbot's sudden, and to them astonishing faint, they had gathered eagerly around him.

"Somethin' bu'st!" cried Bill, sagely, kneeling by the side of the prostrate man, and extending his arms as if to raise him from the ground. But, before the stage-driver could carry out his intentions, Jinnie burst impetuously through the crowd, pushing the miners right and left in her hurry.

With a quick, energetic motion, like a tiger mother springing forward in defense of her young, Jinnie pushed Bill away.

Losing his balance, the stage-driver sprawled over on the flat of his back, like a gigantic frog.

The girl raised the head of the fallen man from the ground and supported it on her knee. With pale features, lips tightly compressed and eyes shooting lurid fires, Jennie looked into Talbot's face. She tore open the band of the shirt that seemed to compress the swollen neck.

"Get me some whisky, quick, some of you!" she cried. The crowd had discreetly fallen back a little after the girl's appearance. There was something terrible in her grief that impressed even the rude miners with awe.

Two or three of the crowd ran into the saloon after the whisky.

Jennie bent over the pale face; her long hair had escaped from the knot that usually held it in place and came down like a red screen around the shapely head of Talbot. Concealed by the tangled mass of hair that half hid her action from the gaze of the wondering crowd, Jennie kissed the pale lips of the senseless man with a dozen or more eager, burning kisses, as though she thought the fire of her lips would woo him back to life.

She thought not of those that stood around her; she would have done the same had all the world witnessed the action.

The color came back to the pale lips; the passionate kisses had accomplished their object; Talbot was reviving.

The girl raised her fearless eyes—there was too much fire in her soul for tears—joyfully to heaven. Her eyes rested on the pale face of Bernice, pressed against the glass. Had not Bernice been clad in her night-dress, robbed for rest, she too would have sprung as eagerly as the other to the assistance of the fallen man.

With the quick instinct of woman, Bernice had guessed what had taken place, when the red-gold hair of Jennie had swept, screen-like, around the face of Talbot. She could hear the eager, kisses wooing life into the cold lips, though they reached no other ears. That little minute was an hour of torture to the soul of Bernice.

The eyes of the two girls met. Bad words, a single glance, and a glance of hatred met and returned.

"She loves him too!"

Four unspoken words, flashing through two brains at the same moment; from that moment Bernice Gwynne, the woman who seeks, and Jennie, the girl who runs the Eldorado saloon, knew that they were bitter enemies.

With a roar and a howl, the three miners rushed from the saloon with a bottle of whisky, to which the Heathen Chinese, Ah Ling, clung with the courage of desperation.

"Melican man, no have—payee, allee same!" he screamed, in remonstrance.

When the three rough fellows had rushed into the saloon and seized the first bottle that came handy and prepared to depart with it, the faithful "Chinese" had battled manfully with the thieves as he supposed the intruders to be, as they hadn't tendered payment for the whisky or given any explanation.

"All right, Heathen," said Jennie, taking the liquor. There was a strange, unnatural tone in the girl's voice. A forced calmness that seemed to tell of a raging fire within; something like the thin crust that covers the volcano's flame.

The Chinaman retreated into the saloon again, smiling blandly.

Jennie poured the whisky into the hollow of her hand and dashed it upon the head that lay on her knee.

The smell of the potent spirits finished what the kisses of the girl had begun. Strange, medicines, the pure and dewy lips of the girl and the fiery incense of the soul-destroying liquor.

Slowly Talbot opened his eyes and looked around him, with a wondering gaze.

"Be a man, Dick," murmured Jennie, reproachfully, in his ear. "You have fainted like a girl."

"You don't know the cause," he answered, a shiver shaking his form as though icy fingers had touched him.

"Yes, I do!" Jennie exclaimed. "I am not blind, Dick; it is this woman—this stranger from the East."

There was just a little touch of reproach in the girl's voice.

"Come now, get on your feet!" cried the red-shirted miner, who began to bluster again, thinking from Talbot's sudden illness that he had an easy job before him. "Stand up an' take your gruel like a man. I kin hug a bar to death, I kin. I'm the cavortin' grizzly from Red Dog, who-oo-op!"

"Say, Dick, lemme peel the hide off this ring-tailed mule!" cried Ginger Bill, who had risen to his feet after being pushed over by Jennie's impetuous rush, and stood quietly by, looking on.

"No, no," replied Talbot, rising to his feet, his strength having apparently all returned to him. "I ask no man to fight my battles. This fellow wants a lesson; he shall have one. Jennie, go in; this is no place for you," but, even as he spoke in a chiding tone, he pressed the brown hand of the girl within his own, softly.

The pressure brought the quick, tell-tale blood to the cheeks and forehead of the girl; her eyes, too, flashed with a joyous light.

Without a word, she quitted his side, and went toward the saloon.

A single glance she gave at the pale face that still was pressed against the window-glass above. Upon her features was a look of defiance—of triumph. Bernice answered it with a scornful, contemptuous glance.

Rivals for one man's love were now those two girls, who, but an hour before, had never seen each other.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO LOVES FOR ONE HEART.

A deep silence reigned among the rough crowd as Talbot stepped forward and confronted the giant.

The contrast between the two was great; not that there was such a difference between them in size, for now that the miner had doffed his high-crowned hat, and bare head, he did not appear to be a great deal larger in frame than his opponent—only taller. His arms were larger, but the bulk came from pounds of useless flesh, not from sinew and muscle.

A pugilist would have looked with admiration upon the easy and graceful posture of Injun Dick, as he carelessly threw himself into position and faced the miner.

It was the old story over again; brute strength against cultivated skill.

A desperate rush the miner made at his opponent. His brawny arms cut the air as blow succeeded blow, but their force was wasted upon empty space. Agile and grace-

ful as a dancing-master, Dick either stepped back out of reach, or warded off the blows, as the rock throws aside the breaking wave.

Out of breath, the giant paused.

"Putty man you are, ain't ye? Why don't you stand still and lemme hit you? Yer wuss nor a peratie dog!" growled the miner, breathlessly.

Without replying, Talbot measured the distance and sent out his right arm, as if intending to strike the giant on the breast. Clumsily the miner dropped his arm to ward off the blow, when, quick as a flash, rapid tap! the knuckles of Talbot left their mark on the face of his opponent; then Dick jumped back again, out of distance, and, putting down his hands, laughed at the bewilderment of the astonished giant.

"How's that for high?" suggested one of the crowd.

"This is as good as a circus!" roared Bill, in huge delight. "Got any more fellows like you in Red Dog?"

Maddened by the taunt, as well as by the smart of the three cuts in his face, which did not improve his personal beauty at all, the miner made another desperate rush at Talbot.

This time Injun Dick adopted new tactics; he gave way for a foot or two, then dodged under the arm of the miner, and, as he turned to follow him, tripped him with his foot. As he stumbled, Talbot caught him sideways, passed his arm over his neck, pressed him against his hip, and, lifting him by sheer strength from the ground, turned him over in the air, thus giving him, in wrestling parlance, a clean "cross-buttock" fall.

Down came the giant with terrible force to the ground. The shock stunned him. Senseless he lay, prostrate on the earth.

"He's got all he wants," said Bill, quietly. "If you're kill, open your mouth an' say so, but luck to yees!" cried the Irishman, Patsy, kneeling by the miner.

"He's only stunned," Talbot said, coolly, unrolling the sleeves of his shirt. "He'll be over it in a minute. He wanted a lesson, and now he's got it."

"Guess he won't want any more," Bill said, with a chuckle, in which the majority of the crowd joined. The Spur-Cityites naturally rejoiced to see their townsman get the best of the stranger.

In a few minutes, the miner recovered from the effects of the fall. He sat up and looked around him.

"Gosh! my head feels bigger'n a bushel basket!" he ejaculated, in a mystified sort of way. "Reckon I'd better travel; you've got too many airtquakes round hyer fur me." Then he rose slowly to his feet and approached Talbot, who stood with folded arms. "Stranger, yer too much fur me. I axes yer pardon fur cavortin' round hyer, an' I'll jist git up an' dust. You're jist lightnin'!"

"You're jist lightnin'!" he said, with a grin. "The first time you hit me, I thought my head an' the hind leg of a mule had been suddenly introduced. If you ever want a feller fur to hold your hat in a free fight, jist call on me; I'm your antelope!"

Then the miner picked up his hat, and started off up the street.

The crowd made a break for the door of the saloon, but were confronted on the threshold by Jennie.

"No more Eldorado to night, gentlemen," the girl said, decidedly. "It's nearly one, and time for everybody to be in bed. The bar's closed up."

"Jist one drink, Jennie, all round, fur to celebrate the salivatin' of that galoot," pleaded Bill. But the girl was firm, and the crowd slowly dispersed to their "roosting-places," as Bill facetiously observed.

The driver, and a few others who roomed in the Eldorado, entered the now darkened saloon, which was lighted only by one small lamp.

Talbot, who had put on his hat and coat, remained outside, leaning against the door-post, apparently buried in thought.

Jennie waited until all the idlers had dispersed; then she approached Talbot.

"What is the matter with you, Dick?" she asked, in a low, soothing voice; "you seem like a man in a dream."

Talbot started, roused from his abstraction by the girl's question.

"I—I am not well," he said, slowly, a painful restraint evident in his manner.

"And it is all the fault of this strange woman; she has bewitched you, Dick."

"Perhaps she has," he replied.

"I know she has!" Jennie cried, earnestly.

"It was her presence that made you act so strangely in the saloon. It was the sight of her face in the window above that made you, the strong, resolute man, faint like a weak woman when you looked upon it. Why should this person possess such a strange influence over you?"

And then she asked the question, a sudden and fearful suspicion shot across her mind. A thought that made her clench her teeth in agony, and catch her breath as though life were about to desert her. But Talbot, his thoughts far away, his eyes fixed in a vacant stare, afar off, where the dark line of the pines cut the mountain peaks, whitened by the moon-beams, did not notice the agitation of the girl. He did not even hear the words that she addressed to him.

"Dick!" she cried, impetuously, pulling him by the coat-sleeve, "will you answer a question?"

Talbot, recalled from dreamland by the pressure of Jennie's hand upon his arm, looked upon the girl in astonishment. He saw the signs of agitation that were so apparent in her face.

"Answer a question, Jennie? Of course I will," he said.

"No matter what it is?" persisted the girl, with feverish lips and burning eyes.

"Yes, no matter what it is," Talbot replied.

"Truthfully?"

"Jennie, did you ever know me to speak in any other way?" he asked, reproachfully.

"Forgive me, Dick!" she said, her heart throbbing almost to bursting, and, with a deep sigh, she laid her head upon his shoulder. The red-gold hair was still flying freely in the breeze.

A moment Talbot looked into the little face that nestled on his shoulder; the sweet witchery that comes from the fair and gentle presence of a young and lovely woman, was softly stealing over him. Tenderly he wound his arm around the slender waist of the girl, and kissed the low, brown forehead.

Jennie shuddered, and a deep sigh came from her lips when she felt the cold kiss of Talbot upon her temple. Dreamily, she closed her eyes and nestled still closer to the man by whose side she stood.

"And now, Jennie, what is the question that you wish me to answer?" he asked, softly.

"Have you ever seen this woman before?" and the eyes unclosed and fixed themselves with an eager gaze upon his face as she asked the question.

Talbot's face grew rigid as marble as the question fell upon his ears; yet, in the face, the eager, searching eyes, the girl read neither yes or no.

"What makes you ask such a question?" he said, as if wishing to evade a direct reply.

"Dick, you are not answering me!" the girl exclaimed, reproachfully. "What can it matter to you the motive I have for asking? You promised me that you would answer. Will you keep that promise?"

"Yes," he replied, after a moment's hesitation, and in that moment he gazed into the face of the girl as though he expected to read something within there.

"You will answer?" she exclaimed, quickly.

"Yes; I have never seen this woman before," he said, slowly and firmly.

"Then she is not your wife?" Jennie cried, a touch of joy in her voice.

"My wife!" Talbot said, in astonishment, "why, what put such an idea as that into your head?"

"I do not know," Jennie replied; "the thought came to me. You are from the East, so is she. I thought, perhaps, that she was your wife before you came here, and that she had now come after you."

"Your thought was wrong, Jennie; I have never been married."

"And you don't love this woman?" the girl asked, anxiously.

"Why should I love a woman that I never saw before?"

A long breath of relief came from the girl's lips at the reply; a terrible load had been taken off her heart.

"And now, Jennie, good-night; I must be off," he continued.

"Where are you going to-night?"

"To Jim Blood's room, down the street. Jim is up in Austen, and I shall take possession of his shanty until he comes back. I've got the key. So, good-night, once more." Again he kissed the low forehead, and then walked carelessly down the street. Jennie watched him until he entered a little shanty, some hundred paces on; then she entered the saloon.

Hardly had the girl disappeared, when a dark shadow, that had been concealed behind one of the houses opposite, came from its hiding-place, and stole cautiously down the street to the shanty where Talbot had said he would pass the night.

The spy crossed the street and peered in through the window of Injun Dick's retreat. From the shanty came the feeble gleams of a candle's light.

When the light was extinguished, the spy whistled, softly. North from the darkness came two other figures, who joined the first. They were all dressed alike, in long, black gowns, and their heads were covered with black hoods.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 68.)

The Detective's Ward:

OR, THE FORTUNES OF A BOWERY GIRL.

BY AGILE PENNE,
AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL, THE ORANGE GIRL,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DETECTIVE'S RUSE.

CONSTERNATION reigned supreme in the Olkoff mansion. The mysterious disappearance of Lillian astonished all the household.

The old gentleman cross-examined the servants but gained no information.

Lillian had retired to rest about ten o'clock as usual. She had bidden her maid good-night, and closed the door of her chamber behind her. The girl was the last one who had seen Lillian. But her evidence afforded no clue.

In utter astonishment, Olkoff sent at once for the detective officer, Peters. He had grown to have great faith in the keen wits of that gentleman.

Luckily for the merchant, Peters happened to be in his office and so was able to come at once. Just one hour after the girl's absence had been discovered, the detective officer stood within her room.

Quietly, and with apparent unconcern, the detective questioned the girl who had hidden Lillian good-night.

The maid told a plain, straight-forward story. She was coming upstairs just as Lillian entered her room. Lillian paused a moment, looked to see who it was, said, "Is that you, Mary?" the girl answered, "Yes," then Lillian said "Good-night," entered her room and closed the door behind her.

"How was Miss Lillian dressed?" asked Peters.

"In her house-dress, sir, a merino, wine-color."

"Where does Miss Lillian keep the things she wears in the street, shawls, cloaks and hats?"

"In that closet, sir," replied the girl, pointing to it.

"Do you know all the articles of that sort that Miss Lillian had?"

"Yes, sir."

"Look and see if any thing is missing."

The girl obeyed the order.

It may be as well to mention that the only witness to the conversation between the detective and the girl was the old merchant.

"Oh!" cried the girl, suddenly.

"Something gone?" asked Peters, quietly.

"Yes, sir, a plaid shawl."

"What colors?"

"Black and white."

"Ah! now we're getting at it," observed the detective, carelessly. "Mary—I believe your name is Mary, isn't it, my dear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you happen to notice what sort of shoes Miss Lillian had on last night?"

"Yes, sir; her house slippers." In her own mind the girl set the detective down as being a perfect gentleman.

"Ah! now we are getting at it," exclaimed Peters, in a sort of self-satisfied tone. "Mary, where does Miss Lillian keep her shoes?"

"In this closet, sir."

"See if they are all there."

"Yes, sir," replied the girl, promptly. The shoes were right before her eyes; no need of an examination.

"They are all there? none missing?" Peters asked.

"No, sir."

"Ah! now we've got it!" and Peters smiled, beamingly.

"You have discovered a clue?" asked Olkoff, anxiously.

"Yes, sir; the explanation is a reasonable one. Miss Lillian, after bidding this young lady good-night, and closing the door, suddenly took the idea into her head that she wanted something; a paper of candy or something of that sort, most probably; so she just slipped the plaid shawl over her head and ran out to get it. On the way to the store, or back, something happened to her; a fainting-fit, perhaps. I've no doubt that I'll find out all about it at the station-house."

Olkoff was about to expostulate against this reasoning, but catching Peters' eye, a knowing wink warned him to be silent.

"Oh, yes, of course—very probably," he said.

"By the way, Mr. Olkoff, how about that rare book that you wanted to show me the other day?" Peters said, carelessly.

Olkoff understood the detective's meaning. He wished to speak with him in private.

"Certainly—come into the library."

Olkoff led the way; Peters followed, while Mary descended into the lower region to tell the servants of the detective's explanation of Miss Lillian's mysterious disappearance; and also to sing the praises of that worthy and astute officer.

"A perfect gentleman!" Such was the housemaid's opinion.

In the library Peters closed the door carefully behind him. The careless expression upon the features of the detective passed away and a thoughtful one took its place.

"Well, well?" questioned Olkoff, nervously; "you don't really believe in this explanation that you have given?"

"Of course not," Peters replied; "but it is necessary that the girl should believe, and say, that I am satisfied. If certain parties think that I am on a false scent, they won't be so careful to cover up their tracks, as otherwise they might be."

"But, Mr. Peters, pray relieve my suspense!" exclaimed the old gentleman, anxiously; "what do you think has become of the girl?"

"She has been carried off," replied the detective, quietly. His composed manner forming a strange contrast to the nervous excitement of the old gentleman.

"Carried off!" cried Olkoff, in horror.

"That is precisely what has occurred. Do you remember that I remarked that possession was nine points of the law? that brilliant idea has also occurred to somebody else. They have put it in practice, too, by carrying off the girl."

"Ah! then you think that this colonel, who pretends to represent the girl's father, is at the bottom of this outrage?"

"That is my thought, exactly; and now, I am more and more impressed with the belief that I had first; that is, that the father does not exist; that this colonel is both agent and principal. After his interview with you he came to the conclusion that you might defy him to do his worst, and knowing that he could not produce the father and thus take the girl away from you, by force of law, he kidnaps her."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed Olkoff, in anguish.

"My dear sir, there are stranger crimes committed in this world than you read of in the columns of the newspaper. The fellow is playing a game of bluff with you; he feared that you would prove as good a hand at that as himself. He gets you to make a promise to do nothing underhand; that is, not to hide the girl away, and in the mean time he coolly steals her himself."

Yesterday you had the advantage; to-day he possesses it. When she comes to see you he will offer to sell the girl to you for five thousand dollars. By Jove! Mr. Olkoff, this colonel is a far more clever rogue than I thought."

"What is to be done?"

"Temporize—promise every thing and give nothing," replied Peters, coolly. "We must meet this fellow at his own game, and use his weapons."

"But, how in heaven's name could he manage to carry off the girl? Surely she would not have gone with him of her own free will!"

"No," replied Peters, quickly; "the last time I was here, she promised me that she would not leave this house. She gave me her word, and she meant to keep it, sir; no fear of that. She never left this house of her own free will."

"I believe it!" cried Olkoff, emphatically.

"Don't spare money to aid you in discovering her, Mr. Peters; call on me for all you want. I love the girl as if she were my own child."

"I'll find her, sir; don't fear as to that!" said the detective, with determination.

"And for a clue, I didn't discover much upstairs. The shawl that is missing was probably used by the abductors to wrap around her head, and so conceal her face."

"But I should have thought that she would have given an alarm."

"Bless you! they didn't give her the chance!" exclaimed the detective. "The fellows were probably concealed in her room; the moment she entered it, they stupefied her. Men are drugged and robbed every day in New York. The doctors say it can't be done, but, nevertheless, it is done, as the police records show. The parties then wrapped the shawl around her head, and carried her out of the house, probably had a carriage in waiting, put her in it, and drove off."

"But I can't understand how they could dare to attempt so bold an outrage!" said the merchant, in amazement. "The hour was early; the chance of encountering some one of my household great. How could they tell that we had gone to bed?"

"Simply enough; whoever carried out this abduction had an accomplice inside the house."

"What!" and Olkoff started in amazement.

"Some one inside introduced the ruffians. They drugged the girl; then the inside fellow conducted them from the house, of course first assuring himself that everybody had gone to bed. I had this suspicion when I led her off on a false scent. Of course she will repeat my words down-stairs among the servants. The one who has acted in collusion with the abductors will believe that his part in the affair is not suspected. He will be off his guard, and the first thing he knows, I'll catch him tripping."

"Mr. Peters, Heaven will surely aid you, for you are fighting the battle of the weak against the strong, of the helpless girl against her bold, bad enemies," said the old man, impressively.

"I trust so, sir," replied Peters; "and now I must see your servants; and without exciting their suspicions as to the object I have in view."

"How can it be effected?"

"I've thought of a way," replied the detective, his mind ever fertile in ideas. "Have you a burglar-alarm applied to your house?"

"No, sir."

"You want one, of course, and you ask my advice in regard to the proper places to attach the aforesaid. In order to give you an opinion, I must examine the basement-floor. You, of course, go with me, and during the examination, I shall be enabled to see all the servants."

"A capital idea!" exclaimed the merchant.

"It will work," replied Peters, complacently. "We must take occasion to speak about the alarm, so that the servants will understand what we are after."

"You think you can detect the one who is in league with the ruffians?"

"Well, I can try," replied Peters, non-committal in his speech. "A man can't do more, you know."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Yes, I understand now; you watch him that he may lead you to those who employed him."

"That's the idea exactly," replied the detective.

"Remember, Mr. Peters, money is no object so that you rescue the girl from the hands of these villains!" cried the old man, earnestly.

"I'll do my best, sir; never fear! I'll go down-town at once, and arrange with my partner to take up the scent. Hank will run Mr. Michael to the earth, unless he's a deal smarter chap than I take him to be."

Peters moved toward the door, when it opened suddenly, and John, the servant, entered with a card.

"The same gent as came yesterday, sir," said John, presenting the card.

"Colonel Roland Peyton!" the merchant said, in amazement, as he gazed at the paste-board.

For once in his life, the keen detective looked utterly astonished.

"What shall I do?" asked Ollkoff, addressing the detective. The merchant was astounded at the visit.

"Why, have him shown in, of course," Peters replied, instantly. The detective had determined upon a plan of action, immediately.

John retired to usher in the colonel. "I'll retire into the other room; the fellow is playing a bold game; we haven't got any common rascal to deal with here, sir; it will take all our wits to get the best of him!" cried Peters, rapidly, retreating as he spoke, through the door that led into the back parlor.

"But, what shall I say to this man?" demanded Ollkoff, who was completely bewildered.

"Hear what he has to say first; then say what you like in reply; it don't make much difference."

Peters disappeared, and the door closed just as John conducted the colonel into the parlor.

Peyton was gotten up regardless of expense, as usual. He bowed in a very dignified manner to the merchant, and a bland, self-satisfied smile was on his face.

John withdrew and closed the door. "I trust that you are enjoying good health this morning," the colonel said, urbanely.

Ollkoff glared at the adventurer in rage; he could hardly restrain his passion; he hardly dared to trust himself to speak.

"As you have forgotten to ask me to be seated, I trust you will excuse me if I take a chair without waiting for an invitation," and the colonel sat down.

The merchant could hardly choke down his anger. The cool impudence of his visitor astounded him.

"Now then to business; I trust you will pardon any lack of ceremony on my part; business is business, you know," Peyton said, coming directly to the point. "Have you considered the proposition that I made to you yesterday? Are you ready to give me your answer?"

"Answer, sir?" exclaimed Ollkoff, making a great effort to subdue his rage.

"That is precisely what I said," replied Peyton, coolly. "Which is it to be, five thousand dollars or the girl?"

"You have the impudence to come here and put that question after what happened last night?" cried the merchant, in anger.

The colonel stared in amazement at this outburst of passion.

"Well, sir, I haven't the remotest idea to what you are alluding!" the colonel replied, astonishment in his voice. "Of course, it is utterly impossible for me to guess what happened last night. If you will inform me, and explain in what way it concerns me, I shall be much obliged to you."

"Upon my word, I think you are the coolest rascal that I have ever seen!" cried Ollkoff.

"I am really much obliged to you for the favorable opinion that you have given of me," replied Peyton, not at all disconcerted. "But as I have once before remarked, to business. Which is it? your election—the money or the girl?"

"How can I give you the girl, sir, when you have already stolen her from me?" cried Ollkoff, in anger.

"What's that you say?" cried Peyton, springing to his feet.

"Your bluster won't avail you here, you infernal scoundrel!" cried Ollkoff, in wrath. "You abducted the girl from my house last night!"

"Do you mean to say the girl is gone?" "You know she is gone," you villain! and the merchant shook his clenched fist in the face of the colonel, who retreated a step at the menacing movement.

"Oh! I see your game," cried Peyton, beginning to show signs of anger. "You have hidden the girl in spite of your promise not to do any thing underhand. You won't beat me! I'll find the girl if she's a thousand miles away! Just you mark me, you shant have her unless you pay five thousand dollars for her. You need keener wits than you have in your head, Obadiah Ollkoff, to measure strength with me!" Then the colonel made a hasty exit from the house.

Peters re-entered the parlor.

"I don't know what to think!" he exclaimed; "I own up clean beat!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 65.)

Rosa Kent's Riddle.

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER I.

"AND now, my dear Rosa, I have come for your answer to my proposal of yesterday."

Thus spoke handsome Fred Travis, as he entered the room wherein sat the woman of his heart—Rosa Kent.

"What impatient creatures men are," replied Rosa, a roguish smile upon her lips. "It is true, I promised you yesterday that I would give you an answer to-day, and here it is in the form of a 'riddle,' and she placed in his hand a slip of white paper written upon one side.

"Ah! up to your roguish tricks again," returned Fred, taking the paper. "If you evade my question much longer, I shall take it for granted that you do not intend to give me an answer at all."

The dark eyes of pretty little Rosa Kent, the belle of Elmwood, sparkled with merriment, and a smile played about her red, ripe lips as she replied:

"You have accused me, Fred, of trifling with your patience, and, to be revenged, I wrote that note, which embodies my answer as to whether I will or will not be your wife. Now you can read it."

Fred smiled at the little torment and at the same time tried to look angry.

"I am not good at guessing riddles," he said, glancing at the paper, then read:

"How serious have been my reflections, how moved my heart, when I recall the past; and when I cull the flowers of bygone days, the hand of memory trembles at the touch of those beautiful gems which I know none but the hand of God can give back to you and me, dear Fred."

"Well," said Fred, when he had finished reading, "I can see nothing in that, Rosa, that has the shadow of an answer about it, but rather a lament for the past."

Rosa smiled at her lover's perplexity. "That is my riddle, Fred," she replied; "study well the note, for my answer is there in a few words."

Fred looked at the paper again. There were ten words underscored, or *italicized*. Why was this, he asked himself, unless Rosa had fallen into the error of young writers of thinking that emphasis would lend to the vigor of their writings? Thus he mused for some time. Suddenly a smile passed over his face. He had fathomed the secret of the letter. He had the maiden's answer in black and white. She had plighted him her hand and heart, and he at once proceeded to explain the secret of the note to his author.

"Well, you are good at guessing riddles, dear Fred, so you have my answer."

Fred clasped the form of his betrothed to his heart and kissed her rosy lips. His cup of joy was full.

"This I shall keep as long as I live," he said, folding the paper and placing it in his pocket, "and never will I forget your riddle, dear Rosa."

Little did either Rosa Kent or her lover dream that their future happiness—yes, that the life of the future hung upon the words:

"Never will I forget your riddle, dear Rosa."

The secret connected with the note was to be explained to the reader in the sequel of my story.

CHAPTER II.

THE greatest wonder and excitement prevailed throughout Elmwood. The day before that on which she was to have been married to Frederick Travis, Rosa Kent had disappeared from her father's house. As she had very often gone out without her friends' knowledge, they thought nothing of it when she was first missed, supposing she had merely gone to call upon some of her neighbor girls; but, when the night had passed and the dawn ushered in the morning of her wedding-day, it found her still absent.

The wonder of her parents was now aroused, and without creating excitement, servants were dispatched to the nearest neighbors in search; but, as they heard nothing of her, and the wedding hour was drawing near, the news of her mysterious disappearance became general, and ran like wildfire over the town. Everybody turned out in quest of the missing maiden; messengers were dispatched in all directions; the wedding hour came and passed; the guests returned home; night came on apace, but no tidings from Rosa Kent!

Fred Travis, almost heart broken, neither slept nor ate, and Mr. and Mrs. Kent wept in despair for the absent one.

The days passed on and the excitement over Rosa's disappearance gradually calmed down into a mere day's wonder. The search was given up, and with a sad heart Fred resumed his legal labor. The sorrowing parents gave up all hopes of ever knowing what had been the fate of their child, but in this they were happily, or rather sadly disappointed.

Five days after her disappearance, Fred Travis received a letter from his betrothed. Judge of his shame and mortification when on opening it he read:

"FRED TRAVIS:—I know you will be surprised on receiving this, but I feel that I am under obligations, at least, to tell you that my heart has long been yours, and I have chosen to be united with you, and by the strong power of love cherished for me in the heart of Orson Kenneth. I presume you were surprised at my absence on what was supposed to have been our wedding-day; but, true happiness with love is preferable to honors without love. The former I can have with Orson; the latter I could have with you. To-morrow we sail for Europe, and my last injunction is—if you wish to erase the past from your memory, go to the sea-shore and shut yourself up in Coast Ruins with its ghosts a few days."

"Rosa Kent."

Fred crushed the note in his hand as he fairly hissed:

"Orson Kenneth! blackleg and gambler! I can scarcely believe that Rosa has fled with him—I would not believe it, did I not have it in black and white in her own handwriting. False-hearted woman, Heaven will punish you for the shame that you have brought upon me!"

As he concluded his soliloquy, he unfolded the note and read it again, as if to assure himself that he was mistaken. As he did so, a low exclamation escaped his lips, as though it had been caused by an inward pain. His hand trembled violently, and his face assumed the mingled expressions of joy and anger. He noticed that which he had overlooked before, and which he would have overlooked a thousand times, had he not, in trying to recall the past, remembered his words spoken in the manner of a promise to Rosa—the words, "Never will I forget your riddle, dear Rosa!"

What he had noticed in this letter was that a number of the words were underscored with two lines, which in print would render them the same as small capitals. Fred glanced over the letter and the emphasized words, as he had done in reading the riddle a few days previous. A cry, that was almost prolonged into a shout, burst from his lips.

"Thank God, Rosa is true! That accused Kenneth has abducted her; but she shall be rescued, and the fiend incarnate shall pay for his villainy with his—"

"Fred, my boy, what are you raving about in such a manner?"

It was Mr. Kent, Rosa's father, who had entered the young lawyer's office unobserved and overheard Fred's soliloquy.

"Thank God! thank God!" returned Fred. "Rosa is heard from, Mr. Kent. She was abducted and carried away by that villain, Orson Kenneth, whom she rejected, a month ago. I say she was abducted by him; this, however, I am not certain of, but she is a prisoner in his power. I have a letter from her—a cipher letter. Read it, Mr. Kent, read it!"

Mr. Kent read the letter, and groaned in agony of heart at its import.

"Fred! Fred! you are crazy! She—she eloped with Kenneth—she has disgraced—"

"No, no, Mr. Kent, there is a secret about that communication. Kenneth has no doubt forced her to write that letter in full, but

there is a secret in it, Mr. Kent, a secret," said Fred, in an excited manner; "look here"—taking the letter in his hand—

"read these words underscored in the order that they occur, and independent of the other words. They form a sentence of themselves, and reveal the secret of Rosa's disappearance, and her present whereabouts."

Mr. Kent adjusted his glasses and read aloud the underscored words in the letter:

"I AM A PRISONER IN THE POWER OF ORSON KENNETH AT COAST RUINS."

There was a momentary silence; then Mr. Kent uttered a cry of joy.

"How came you to discover this secret sentence, Fred?" he asked.

"From the fact that Rosa had puzzled me with such a one before," and he drew from his pocket Rosa's "riddle," as she termed it, and read, separate from the others, those words that were underscored, taking them in the order that they occurred. They formed a sentence, and read thus:

"My heart and hand I give to you, dear Fred."

CHAPTER III.

TWENTY miles east of Elmwood, on a bleak, isolated point of rocks overlooking the sea, stood the ruins of an old stone building known as Coast Ruins. When and by whom it had been built, nobody knew. Some said it had been erected by pirates in Kidd's days, but of this there was no authentic record; and as the place was reported to be haunted, of course nobody felt interested enough to search the place for proof of its being the headquarters of the freshshooters of the Spanish Main. But no difference what it had been used for in its earlier history; at the time of which we write, it was used as the headquarters of a band of smugglers and counterfeiters, of which this Orson Kenneth was the chief.

Three months previous to the opening of our story, Orson Kenneth had made his appearance at Elmwood with forged testimonials of good character, and with the avowed purpose of going into business there. He boarded at the first-class hotel, dressed well, and in various ways made a great display of opulence which at once admitted him into the first society. In the course of time he made the acquaintance of Rosa Kent, which finally resulted in his proposing for her hand, and his rejection. This so enraged the handsome Mr. Kenneth, whom all the fashionable and shallow-minded of Elmwood thought every young woman in town was striving to win, that when he heard of Rosa's intended marriage with Fred Travis, he resolved to carry her off to Coast Ruins, and force her to marry him. This daring and acute rogue succeeded in doing by concealing himself and an associate in the park surrounding her father's house, and when she went out to walk there alone between sundown and dark, they sprung from their covert and seized her, muffling her voice in the folds of a heavy coat.

She was then conducted to Coast Ruins and locked up in a dark room of the damp old ruins. The following day Kenneth entered her room with paper, pen and ink, and placed them upon a rude table before her. He then informed her that she was to write a letter to Fred Travis, telling him that she had eloped with Orson Kenneth.

Rosa saw the villain's intention, but she was brave and fearless, and as quick-witted as her abductor was unprincipled and scheming. No sooner had he spoken, than she remembered what her lover had said in regard to the secret cipher or riddle, she had given him to solve on the day of their betrothal. In fact, some weird voice seemed to whisper: "Never will I forget your riddle, dear Rosa."

At first, she refused to obey his order, but when the smuggler declared she should write the note, she said, resignedly:

"Write out the letter that you would wish me to write, and I will copy it."

That will do, exactly," he said, and, seating himself, drew up the form of the letter which Rosa copied, verbatim. When she had done, she read the cruel, insulting letter over, and selecting from it such words as would form a sentence, as she had done in her riddle to Fred, underscored them with a double line—thus giving such notice of her imprisonment as would put at rest the minds of her friends and lover and lead to her rescue.

Judge of the young smuggler's surprise when, on the next day after he had dispatched the note to Elmwood, he found himself and party prisoners in the power of a posse of men headed by Fred Travis of Elmwood; and when Rosa had been taken from the room, from which Kenneth had said she should never go until as his wife, and permitted to confront the villain, she very pleasantly informed him how she had revealed her whereabouts in the letter by underscoring a number of words, and which he had noticed on inspecting the letter and had admired it, for he thought it gave additional vigor and tone to the letter, but never dreaming of the secret connected with it.

The villain ground his teeth and swore terribly, but the game was up, and all the way to Elmwood, with his delicate white hands pinioned at his back, was he compelled to march, and all the time within sight of Rosa Kent.

The counterfeiters caught in their haunt were all tried and condemned as their crimes merited, and many goods of great value were found at Coast Ruins on being searched.

Rosa and Fred were married, and there was nothing in their possessions that they prized higher than the cipher letter and "riddle," though dearer far than all other keepsakes was the bright-eyed boy that eventually came to add another link to their love.

A Noble Wife.—A bankrupt merchant, returning home one night, said to his wife: "My dear, I am ruined; every thing we have is in the hands of the sheriff!"

After a few moments of silence, the wife looked calmly into his face, and said:

"Oh, no!"

"Will he sell me?"

"Oh, no!"

"Will he sell the children?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then do not say that we have lost every thing. All that is most valuable remains to us—manhood, womanhood, childhood. We have lost but the results of our skill and industry. We can make another fortune if our hearts and hands are left us."

Can we wonder that, encouraged by such a noble wife, he is on the road to fortune again?

In the Web:

THE GIRL-WIFE'S TRIALS.

A HEART AND LIFE ROMANCE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY EDWIN SOUTHW.

CHAPTER XX.

A REVELATION.

IT was a misty, foggy morning, and few persons were abroad in the streets when Magdalen Norman and Bradley Turner left the house in Dauphine street, and started for the Second District Police Station. It was quite a long walk, but Magdalen felt so anxious to learn what her "sometime" father had to say to her, and, withal, was so distressed at his misfortune, that she did not feel the fatigue at all, and was rather surprised when Bradley stopped before the dingy prison and said:

"Well, here we are."

"Is this the police station?" asked the girl.

"Yes, this is the place. Just step in, please, and we'll see what poor Silas has got to say."

It was an ugly, rough place, sure enough; and to Magdalen Norman it brought a keen feeling of gloom and heartache. She had a very tender heart she now discovered, for the first time, and whatever her feelings toward Silas formerly were, she experienced nothing but the keenest pity for him now.

"Can we see the prisoner, Silas Norman?" asked Bradley.

"Don't think you can see any Silas Norman," answered the turnkey.

"Why not?"

"Well, for a good and sufficient reason."

"What reason?"

"There isn't no such man here."

"Has he been liberated, then?" Bradley asked, excitedly.

"Well, no," with a yawn, "I guess not, seeing that no person has gotten out yet."

"Was there not a man arrested last night for forgery done in Missouri?" put in Magdalen.

"Yes."

"Well, that's the man, you blockhead," blurted out Bradley, disgusted with what he considered the stupidity of the turnkey.

"Well, I guess that ain't the man, by a jugful," retorted the turnkey. "The man as done that forgery, and is in that cell there, might have called himself Silas Norman, but his real name is nothing but plain Jack Ramsey."

"It don't matter particularly what his name is," interrupted Magdalen; "let us see him, please."

"Yes, ma'am, I will," replied the turnkey, with an admiring glance at the stately beauty of the girl.

He unlocked the door at once, and ushered the visitors into a small corridor that ran in front of the rows of cells.

"Oh, my!" was the exclamation that burst from the girl's lips as she caught sight of John Ramsey's woe-begone features, and then she began to cry.

The girl's emotion touched the prisoner to the quick, and for a moment he could not speak. Then he only managed to say, in something very little louder than a whisper:

"Don't pity me, Mangy; don't pity me. I'm not worth a tear from you. I've injured you too deeply for you to give me any sympathy."

Neither spoke for a while, and the silence was becoming awkward, when Bradley said:

"Si, old boy, I'm sorry for you."

He reached out his hand, and the prisoner clutched it through the bars, and never spoke a word. Finally, the prisoner said, with an effort:

"I sent for you, Mangy, to tell you a secret."

The girl started, and replied:

"Go on."

"Well, then, to be brief, I ain't your father at all!"

Magdalen had long ago suspected that, answered Magdalen; "but, tell me, who is?"

"Douglas Houghton, a rich New York merchant, who, when I heard from him last, had retired from business and was living in a palatial house on the Hudson."

"And my mother?" gasped Magdalen.

"Was Lucy Wren before her marriage with Doug. Houghton. She, too, is still living. You were the first born of that marriage, and I, jealous of your father's success in winning Lucy, abducted you when you were but three years old. It was a terrible revenge, but I am sorry for it now, and have been for a good many years."

This revelation, coming so suddenly, and being in its nature so terrible, almost overcame Magdalen, and feeling herself becoming weak, she said, turning to Bradley:

"I'm very sick; I'm afraid I'm going to faint."

She tottered, and would have fallen had not Turner caught her in his arms.

A half an hour after, she was at her home, in Dauphine street, and was so far recovered as to be able to realize the full import of that strange story she had just listened to.

"And so, Magdalen, you are a grand lady," said Bradley, after a long pause, and with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

She looked across the table at him, and, with a woman's quick wit, divined at once his feelings.

"You are not sorry, Bradley, surely?"

"No; but—"

"But what?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Magdalen, it appears to me I'd rather have you just as you were."

"Why so?"

"Well, you see, a grand lady is a good piece out of Bradley Turner's line; and, while I'm glad, for your sake, that better days have come to you, I know it ain't best for me."

"Do you mean that a bit of good fortune could make me forget you?"

He did not answer.

"Why, Bradley Turner, I didn't think I ever did any thing to make you think meanly of me," she added, after a little while.

"Nor you never did," he replied, with an emphasis on the last word.

"Then, why do you think I will now forget you—you, who picked me up out of the streets—you, who provided me with a good home—you, who respected my lonely position in the world, and taught me, by your noble example, that there is more good than evil in every heart? Bradley Turner, I'll never have cause to think of you kindly, tenderly."

There were tears in his eyes as she concluded, and, without uttering a syllable, he put out his arms, and for the first time in

her life, Magdalen Houghton pillowed her head upon a man's bosom.

"God bless you, Magdalen," was all he could say.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE OLD LOVE AGAIN.

JUNE roses were blushing red, and summer breezes were softly blowing when Magdalen met Mark Blanchard to make arrangements for a speedy and quiet marriage. There was to be no display on this occasion; only a few friends were to be invited, and it was settled that, immediately after the marriage ceremony, the nuptial party were to leave for Europe. They were going to make an extensive tour of the continent; were going to spend a season at Naples, a few months at Florence, a winter at Rome, and finally an indefinite period at gay and fashionable Paris.

At the instigation of Magdalen the utmost exertions had been made to discover the whereabouts of the old hag who had so rudely interrupted the former marriage ceremony but without success.

Of course everybody, including Magdalen and her father, believed her story a disagreeable hoax; and, while the former regretted that it was untrue, she felt it to be her duty to keep the promise she had so solemnly made to Mark.

But now, with all the sweet, delicious balm of this lovely June day about her, she could not help wishing that her wedding-day was a decade, instead of a week, distant.

"You will never find the days long," said Mark, "when we are once married and off for Europe. You say you liked Baden and Venice when you were but a mere child; but, if these delightful spots were pleasant to you then, what will they be now, when you have the judgment of womanhood to appreciate and enjoy them?"

She was plucking a blush rose to atoms and gazing abstractedly out of the open window.

He bit his lip with vexation and said: "Blanche, you seem moody and out of spirits to-day."

"Yes," she answered; "I have been thinking."

"About what?"

She shook her head.

"Oh, nothing; only a girl's dream."

"It strikes me you are much given to dreaming of late."

"I was always addicted to it."

"But, may I ask you the subject of your dream?"

"Certainly not."

His eyes were sparkling now, and while his face grew scarlet, he said, very solemnly: "May I guess?"

"If you will, was the careless reply.

"Graham Cecil?"

She arose to her feet, and, with an offended air, replied:

"No, sir! I wish you a very good-morning."

She looked like an injured queen as she pointed with her index finger to the open doorway and awaited her visitor's departure.

"But, Blanche—" he stammered out.

"Don't compel me to ask you to go," she interrupted. "I am not so low, sir, that I will permit you to insult me."

"I'll come to-morrow and explain," he said, as he moved off.

"Suit yourself, sir," was her answer.

The next instant she heard the gate open and close again, and knowing herself to be alone she hurried up to her chamber. There, casting herself down by the bedside, she cried, aloud:

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Foolscap Papers.

Personal Recollections.

As it is very fashionable nowadays to give personal reminiscences of distinguished men, I beg to be allowed to give a few of my own earlier acquaintances, and hope that the fashion will be kept up after I have departed for parts both unknown and extremely doubtful, that the hundreds of friends I have may do the same toward me.

Daniel Webster was a bosom friend of mine, and used to chew my tobacco. I did him a favor once which he could never forget. He was troubled with bunions and asked me how he could get them out. I advised him to cut holes in his boots and the bunions would come out themselves. He always considered me his national benefactor. He never could tolerate a hole in the heel of his stocking any more than a flaw in his political principles, and I have often heard him damn them himself. His magnanimous heart was not above eating beans. I used to help him with my advice and assist him in writing his speeches. Dan will always remember me.

When Julius Caesar heard I was in Rome he immediately sent for me, made a good deal over me, and assigned the Coliseum to me as a residence. Jule always looked well in a plug hat, but he never liked paper collars. I don't remember of ever having to kick him, for we always got along very well together. Jule preferred his with ice and a straw in it, and I remember that one night we were out together when he took too much straw in it and I was obliged to assist him to his lodgings. Not being very firm on his feet he often went to the ground, and I thought so much of him that I always went with him, for I'd stick to him to the last. My head was very clear and I knew the streets of Rome from Mulberry to Main, and felt confident I could take him right home. He would often stop and throw his arm around me and exclaim, "Ole fellow, you'll never leave me!" and I'd throw my arms around his neck, with "Yer right, Jule, I'm yer fr'en 's long as a drop of old Rye flows in these veins!" and then we would sit down on our hats and cry. Somehow in taking him straight home I got him outside the city limits, but I couldn't account for it the next morning. Jule said he was very glad that modern historians did so much honor to his memory, and spoke often of Jim Fisk, Jr., Horace Greeley and George Francis Train.

His nose crossed the Rubicon before he did. He used to wear my shirts when his were in the wash, and was so fond of me that he had me for dinner and supper every day in preference to any thing else on the table.

Many's the dime I've loaned him. When I left we exchanged tooth-brushes and shed many groans. He afterwards died from the severest cutting he ever received from his friends.

Alexander, the Great, enjoyed the honor of my friendship. In several of his great battles he wore my boots, which accounts for the fact that he never ran. Aleck had always a good deal to say of his celebrated horse, Bucephalus, and thought that Bonner had nothing finer in his stables. He always preferred the ancient to the modern mode of warfare, and wouldn't allow gunpowder to be used in his army—nothing but double-barreled shotguns, breech-loading spears and fiery chariots. He used to be one of the contents of his contented tent, and was with him when he cut the celebrated Gordian knot, which got in his shoe-string, and I loaned him my knife to cut it with. We never had but one little difficulty, and I licked him for that, and we were better friends than ever after that—he had made the unguarded remark in my presence that there were no more worlds to conquer except the United States, and that he didn't care to go there to conquer it, for he said as soon as he would land in New York the snobs would unhitch the horses from his carriage and make a fool of him down.

Aleck was fond of the native Kentucky wine of the Bourbon dynasty, and frequently couldn't tell the stopper from the bottle, for he would fill his bowl very high indeed, and then go there himself. He always thought so much of me that he would never allow me to be out of his sight for fear that he wouldn't see me when he looked at me, and for fear he would miss me when he didn't find me. He was fond of Baltimore oysters, and never stopped for the shells. He finally threw himself away in a whisky-sling, and I was appointed to administer on his affairs (no little job, for he was an extensive landholder) and to write these memories of him.

Pharaoh, the unfortunate king of Egypt, showed his greatness by thinking there was nobody like me, and he would often run away from his wife and come down to my lodgings and stay all night, talking of the Atlantic cable, the last Fenian raid, Andy Johnson and gum-boils, with which he was favored. I let him have my fine-tooth comb during a certain plague, which he used with a good deal of lice-nase.

He was fearfully troubled with snakes. Poor fellow. I stood on the shore and saw

him expire, when he died of drinking a good deal more water than he wanted. He was a large-hearted man, and loved mustard poultices on his bread.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

"Judge Jones," the banker of Spar City; the queer, odd man, who, beneath an icy exterior, conceals a heart of fire; a man of iron will but of terrible passions; the head of the crime-scurving "Vigilantes," who, rising in their might, ornament the pines of the Reese river valley with human fruit—is one of the life-like characters who figure in Mr. Aiken's new serial, "OVERLAND KIT."

OPPORTUNITY.

"THERE is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune."

Truer words were never written. The flood which bears the human bark on to the golden haven will come some time—must come. It may come early in life, when the adventurous youth first tests his strength against the eddying currents of the tide upon which he must swim. Or, it may come when years have cooled the blood and steadied the hand, instead of swaying the heart and unnerve the hand, even when long years of hopeless toil have exerted their desponding influences.

Wait and hope! Golden words, that should be written on each heart, treasured in each mind. Opportunity makes men, or rather makes men's fortunes.

Take our President, Grant, for instance. If it had not been for the opportunity afforded him by the war to show what metal there was in him, it is more than probable that he would have been a simple clerk in the Galena store to-day, instead of swaying the destinies of the Great Republic.

"The man who woke to find himself famous!" It is an old saying. Smith says to Brown, "I never thought he had it in him!" Why? because the man never had a chance to show the talents that he really did possess.

Lincoln had a shrewd saying, that, in this world, half the time, the round pegs got in to the square holes; they didn't fit. In other words, the opportunity hadn't come to the round pegs.

A wise saying; a true one, too. Napoleon I. is perhaps the best example of what "opportunity" has done for a man.

What prophet could have predicted that the sou-lieutenant, in a few short years, would beat the best Generals of the world? What eye could have detected in the quiet and reserved young soldier, the future conqueror?

So it is in our life to-day; we jostle in the street, unnoticed, the man who, in a few years, will be famous.

He is waiting for his opportunity. When it comes, comet-like, he will astonish the world.

Nearly all the great discoveries in science, medicine, etc., have been the result of accident. A man searching after one result has discovered another.

The old-time painter, who wished to produce the foaming mouth of a horse upon his canvas, labored in vain. Despite his skill, the foam looked unnatural. In despair, he dashed the sponge against the canvas—in those days sponges served as brushes—when lo, and behold! the sponge, striking on the mouth, produced the foam he had vainly tried to paint there.

So in our life, half the time, the man tumbles into his opportunity without knowing it. He little dreams that he is on the high road to fortune, until proof after proof convinces him that, at last, he has found his proper sphere.

As we have already said, to some the golden opportunity comes early in life, to others late; but, despair not, for he must be unlucky indeed to whom it never comes.

Of course, all will not become wealthy, nor all famous; the sparrow doesn't fly like the eagle, and the ant will never possess the strength of the lion. Men have their grades; when they overstep them, they do not hold their proper position.

The carpenter astonishes the world with a brilliant essay; it only proves that he misconceived his vocation; he was born for an author—a man of letters—not for a carpenter.

The lawyer builds a capital hen-house. The square peg in a round hole again; he was born for a carpenter, not for the legal profession.

Let no man wonder, then, at sudden fame; either the famous one has found his opportunity, and will forever after hold the position he has won, or else it is but the blaze of the rocket to be succeeded again by the darkness of the night.

Watch, wait and despair not! Even when you are crying out bitterly that your opportunity will never come, it may be close at hand. See that you lose it not, but improve the chance. Toil on steadily, and when the time comes strike boldly. It's a weak heart that fears to win.

Two loves for one heart. Bernice Gwyne, the beautiful New York girl, and Jimmie Johnson, the keeper of the "Eldorado!" Strange rivalry! One, the dashing city belle; the other, the wild flower of the mines, as pretty as the mountain daisy, and as free in thought and act as the wild mustang. Yet both these girls love the same man. A wild and beautiful story is Mr. Aiken's "OVERLAND KIT," or, THE DUEL OF WHITE PINE.

FASHION'S FOLLIES.

THE people of this country are not entirely free yet; they still are slaves to a hard taskmaster, or mistress—Fashion. To be out of the fashion is to be almost out of the world. Because Fashion issues her edicts, it is thought necessary to load another woman's hair on the back of our heads, making us look like overgrown pin-cushions. Then we must just allow a bit of lace and a few flowers to rest on our heads, and everybody must be made to believe that it keeps us as warm as one of those old-fashioned Leghorn affairs that our mothers talk about, which always was seen long before its wearer came in sight. Sometimes Fashion commands us to wear trains to our dresses, probably for the purpose of seeing how much offal we can save the city scavengers from picking up. Just imagine a refined lady bringing home with her a stump of a cigar, an abandoned piece of chewed tobacco, a few orange-peels, and a couple of old hoops in the train of her dress! Don't you suppose she'd pout her pretty lips a little, and wish that those articles were in their appropriate place, even though she does wish it were the Red Sea?

At another time, we find that long dresses must be abandoned, to give way to those

which will not touch the ground, and make the young men on the corners stare us to death. The only benefit it does is to transfer their gaze from our faces to our feet. Then, if Fashion wants us to go limping about as though we had some deformity, we are expected to do it. I never could look on a Grecian Bend but I thought of poor Christian, who was so anxious to get rid of his burden of sin, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," and I wondered if he ever thought that he would be so closely imitated by his fair followers. I always shall believe that fashion was taken from one of his pictures.

Why should we bow to this goddess, Fashion, and be such slaves to her whims and caprices? Because we are so anxious to look more than well in the eyes of our neighbors.

I've often thought the male sex were relieved of the dire troubles Madame Fashion gives us, but there's brother Tom, who will, at one time, wear pantaloons that resemble those we see upon sailors, in the play at the theater, so loose and baggy they are. A month will pass, and brother Tom appears clad in pants so tight that it seems as though it were a perfect torture for him to sit down. I pity him, and ask him what makes him do so. His reply is: "Fashion, my dear Eve." So the men are just as much slaves as we are.

I don't wonder that fathers look with horror at the fashion magazines, and call them "infernal machines," when they bleed their pocket-books so freely.

How much better a person looks, neatly and simply dressed, and how ridiculously uncomfortable some of our musical ladies appear on the stage of the concert-room, with their tucks and frills! They don't look like human beings animated with a soul, but like lay-figures dressed up for show.

I suppose many will think my talk rather personal when I say that hundreds of men and women have their thoughts upon nothing but dress. Such is the case, however, and kneeling on the velvet cushions of the church, they think more of what they have on, and how much admiration they are exciting, than they ought. Don't carry your pride with you into the house of God.

And now we'll wander off into good old Bible times, when Fashion had not spread her net to catch us. Don't we often think that Adam and Eve should have been perfectly contented when they were left unmolested by fashion plates? I think so, and that's the reason why I have written this. When I got into the country, don't I envy the youngsters who can wear patched clothes, throw off shoes and stockings, and run about barefooted? They are not annoyed by Fashion's follies.

EVE LAWLESS.

Ab Ling, the Heaton Chicken, plays a prominent part in Mr. Aiken's new serial, "OVERLAND KIT." The poor heathen who came as a "washerwoman" to Spar City, but who nearly starved, as the miners had a habit of putting on a flannel shirt and wearing it until it was worn out, therefore did not require the services of a washerwoman. The partisans of the rival mining camps, "Paddy's Flat" and "Gopher Gully," are also depicted by a master's hand. The serial, brilliant as a clear Colorado day, is a most vivid presentation of life in the Auriferous Land.

RELIGION IN SACKCLOTH.

IF the class of religious individuals who look upon the world as a "vale of tears," and regard every thing in it as vanity and vexation of spirit, were as lugubrious countenances in the Hereafter as they do here, and take as cheerful views of things generally, what sort of a place will it be? They will complain that their harps are too heavy, or their crowns not a perfect fit, and their seats will always be a little too high or a trifle too low, they will never be able to play any thing much cheerful than "China," or "Old Hundred," and will make all the crochets and quavers into semibreves at that.

That is the heaven they look forward to; but I believe we shall have something to do besides to sit on three-legged stools and play psalm tunes.

But these people—dear me! They will tell you, with a countenance suggestive of a funeral, that there is nothing in this world but trouble and affliction, that it is the lot of mortals and that you mustn't expect any thing else, for you will be sorely disappointed if you do, interspersing the whole with numerous sighs and sniffles that have a very enlivening effect on you, and render you as comfortable as if you were reposing on hot coals. No matter if they are in the enjoyment of every blessing; they always look as solemn as a graveyard, and never see any thing to laugh at. If they talk to you of religion they solemnly enjoin you to be good and love God, not for the sake of being good, and because God is worthy of love, but because if you don't you will be punished! I had my previously exalted opinion of Sabbath Schools wonderfully lowered by one of these too orthodox Christians when I was four years old. I knew all about Sabbath School, from the older children, and was all eagerness on this, my first visit. I looked around on being seated, and was presently approached by a lady with a Bible in her hand. As near as I can calculate, three or four cemeteries, half a dozen undertakers' signs, and a dozen large grindstones, mingled and concentrated, would produce the exact effect expressed in this female's face. She asked me if I could read, and turned to a little girl beside me, of about my own age, and inquired of her if she loved Jesus. The frank and doubtless truthful answer, since she was probably ignorant of him, was "No!"

"Then," said the woman, sternly, "you will go to hell." The child made no reply, and, if she was as shocked as I was, she must have been incapable of doing so. The next information given by the woman was, that it was very hot there, and she must burn forever. Then, doubtless thinking this had frightened the girl into a willingness to say yes, she repeated her first question, and again received a negative reply. On this, she sternly asked if she wanted to go to the warm place mentioned, and receiving an affirmative answer, evidently concluded that her missionary labors with that child were not being blessed, and walked away.

What awful words to shock the tender innocent heart of a little child with! Why did she not tell her of the pure One of Nazareth, and of his love for little children, instead of preaching up eternal punishment? Ah, I think the eyes of him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," looked with sadness on the scene.

I can not help thinking that some of the "hard-shelled" religionists are woefully mis-

taken in the amount of religion they possess. I went to meeting once on a time, in a little log school-house in the backwoods. It was a prayer meeting, and each ancient pillar of the church, after expressing a belief that the Lord was in their midst, declared their firm belief that the world was a wilderness of woe—that there was nothing on the earth, nor in it, that was worthy of their attention—and rejoiced that each day took them nearer Jordan, and shortened their stay in this vale of tears, where everything was trouble, and vanity, and desolation.

I listened to their complaints and aspirations; but, above it all, through the glorious brightness of the summer day, so full of balmy zephyrs and the breath of unfolled blossoms, so instinct with life and light and bird-songs, there sounded in my ears the words, "All things are made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made," and I wondered how people, with all the glorious world He had made and around them, could appear so thankless and ungrateful. It seemed to me like accusing God to his face of making the world so disagreeable a place that it was with difficulty they could stay their allotted time in it.

But these people thought they were worshipping God, and could they have read the thoughts in my mind, they would have undoubtedly thought me what one of their number called a "pretty h-a-r-d-e-a-s-e!"

LETTIE ARLEY IRONS.

LAUGHING.

AMONG the logical definitions of Man, the most popular in the school is that which nominates him "a risible animal." It is certain that no other created being indulges in laughter, though not a few of the brutes and birds utter cries which bear a distinct resemblance to the merry sound. The savage seldom, if ever, laughs, which goes far to signify the great gulf between high intelligence and the degraded man.

Conversely, very few philosophers laugh; not from want of capacity, but rather from weariness, asceticism, or (more commonly) affectation. A felicitous line has done much to suppress free laughter: "The loud laugh proclaims the vacant mind." In deference to the statement many men check a natural impulse for the sake of being classed with minds too preoccupied with superior reflection to indulge in cackling.

Another favorite quotation against exuberant expression of merriment is quoted from even a higher authority: "The laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns under a pot." Those unfortunate folks whose laughter is exhibited in a sort of creptation have this Scriptural "bogey" to frighten them into discreet smiling, for the sake of an appearance of sapience.

There are two modes of expressing merriment—with or without reason. No man should ask another why he laughs, or at what, seeing that he does not always know, and that if he does, he is not a responsible agent.

Laughter is, technically speaking, an involuntary action of certain muscles, developed in the human species by the progress of civilization; and the peculiarities of laughing are so multifarious that it is almost hopeless to attempt to classify them. It is certain that a stupid rustic is generally found on the broad grin, but this is no symptom of the function of risibility; it is merely the vacant stare and open mouth of ignorant admiration, and far removed from the laugh of the perceptive humorist.

It is not everybody who knows how to laugh. A discreet suppression of merriment adds infinite zest to the enjoyment of laughter, while a "horse-laugh" gratifies neither its owner nor the listener. All of us have some acquaintance with, and discrimination between, the more defined types of laughter.

A "fitter" is at once silly and annoying, and more intolerable than a hearty burst of derision; some men always titter when they wish to express merriment, but the means they employ never convey the idea of full enjoyment.

Some men "chuckle;" this has two significations—either malice or inward gratification. A cheerful chuckle will often set a table in good-humor; it is so contagious when unaccompanied by the soupcon of unkindness or sarcasm.

There is a regular gamut of laughter from the genial "Ha, ha!" the insipid "He, he!" the full-toned, cheery, fat, "Ho, ho!" to the covert and satirical "Ugh, ugh!"

Men are known by their forms of expressing joy; and to a woman a pleasant, bright laugh is a great gift, and one difficult of imitation. Witness a stage laugh, which is, as a rule, the hollowest mockery of cheerful sound; and among crowds who are witnessing an amusing performance it is worth while to note the various types.

We all know the innocent, good-tempered laughter which rolls through a theater, like a wave of the sea, at some broad jest on the stage. This is purest melody to the comedian—passing for the music of the spheres.

Then, of individual laughs, there is that of the man who tremendously enjoys a joke, but always takes it when the time for laughter has passed. This incongruity invariably amuses the house, who turn and look for the unlucky man with joyous faces.

Then we have the man whose laughter is like hissing; there is scarcely an audience where this nuisance is not present, and he is really dangerous. He laughs through his closed teeth, and though he means applause, he conveys the sound of disapprobation.

Then there is the treble laughter of children—sweet, honest, innocent; always delightful, and humanizing to listen to.

Then there is the "bursting," or suppressed laugh, which is very infectious, and will run along a line of people who have no idea why they laugh, but can not help it.

It is painful to suppress laughter, and more healthy to give it free vent. A "good laugh," as they say, dispels the vapors, inflates and oxygenates the lungs, promotes and improves circulation, and gives a helping hand to the heart.

It is a medical fact, that people of cheerful disposition enjoy better health than the saturnine. It may be said that cause is here confounded with effect, but our disposition is created, in a measure, by ourselves, and even digestion can be laughed at, if our temperament is kindly, and we are disposed to endure without grumbling.

Laughter is the safety-valve of merriment, and whatever the poets may say of the sentiment of a sigh, we would rather dispense with phantasy and ask for a smile. It is sunshine versus shade.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosures, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book MS., and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of style; third, upon brevity. The length of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number. A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Unavailable: "Under the Boller." MS. returned.—"An Ugly Friend." MS. returned.—"Don't You Know." No stamps. Destroyed.—"A Life for a Hand." No stamps. Destroyed.—"Three Days Ago." MS. returned.—"Castles in Air." MS. returned.—"Trip on the Columbus." MS. returned.—"The Rhine." MS. returned.—"Plutonic Love." MS. returned.—"Fanny Albright's Fate." MS. returned.—"Kitty Lyle." MS. returned.

Available: "Panther Creek." The Major's Hollow Leg." "The Back Track Race." "A Pincky Belle." "Trailing for a Woman." "How Hank Played Devil." "The Great League." "Accepting the Situation." The poem, "Katie Lyle," we return. If it is A. H. L.'s own, he promises exceedingly well. His handwriting is very good indeed—quite up to the "bookkeeper's standard."

Contributions by Mrs. R. H. V. we can not use. Such can be but rarely available, even where most excellent; "Dress" and "Poor Relations," we fear, can hardly be so called. No stamps for return of MSS.

Poem, "Awakened," unavailable. Author's idea of price is somewhat exaggerated. Editors pay \$10 for poems of rare merit, and one of the great masses of rhyme offered for the publishing. No stamps.

"Excelsior" is an old theme for essay or poem. A great many persons of poetic sensibilities and some aptitude for the art, have been misled, because they can write what looks well and reads pleasantly enough in measured lines. But it is no more true poetry than the commonest prose. It is *manufactured* poetry, which any well-qualified editor will detect at a glance. A true poet writes from inspiration and feeling; he writes as he feels like a bricklayer laying up a wall—he *constructs* his work. We charge S. F. nothing for this suggestion but his good will, which we are pleased to know we have always.

WM. V. Each State makes its own laws in regard to the right of persons "to carry pistols for self-defense." All States in the East and North, we believe, forbid such carrying of weapons of war. But, like many other laws—only in rare instances is it enforced. Better not carry a pistol, except some country has actually threatened your life. Hence, "Excelsior" is an old theme for essay or poem. A great many persons of poetic sensibilities and some aptitude for the art, have been misled, because they can write what looks well and reads pleasantly enough in measured lines. But it is no more true poetry than the commonest prose. It is *manufactured* poetry, which any well-qualified editor will detect at a glance. A true poet writes from inspiration and feeling; he writes as he feels like a bricklayer laying up a wall—he *constructs* his work. We charge S. F. nothing for this suggestion but his good will, which we are pleased to know we have always.

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A RECOGNITION.

BY WM. M. F.

The fields are green with smiling June;
The woods ring with the robin's tune;
The mignonette, sweetest of flowers,
Perfumes the cool and shady bowers;
And softly sighs the summer gale,
O'er swelling hill and peaceful dale.
Each blushing field doth fully show,
The blessings which God doth bestow;
I see the goodness He hath hurled
Upon this proud, unthankful world.
Merciful, I know that God doth sway
With love, His scepter day to day.
In spots unfrequented—unknown,
I see the violet bloom, alone;
Like soft-blue eyes they look at me,
And whisper of that Deity.
Farewell, fair May; welcome sweet June,
That fills our paths with light and bloom!

The Lawful Wife.

BY JOSEPH E. RADGER, JR.

ANGUS CLAIBORNE slowly ascended the stairs leading to the second floor in the rear portion of his grand but gloomy-looking mansion in — street, Philadelphia. A look of half-doubt, half-fear was upon his face, but there was a cold, merciless glitter in his gray eyes, telling of some stern resolve that would be carried out despite any threatening danger.

He paused before a closed door, and stood with head bowed as if in deep thought. Then producing a heavy key, he unlocked and opened the door, entering and quickly closing it behind him.

He stood upon the threshold of what seemed a prison cell. A deep window, heavily barred, looking out upon the cold cheerless back yard. The dismal clank of iron chains—the half-stifled cry of a prisoner.

Before him, seated upon a low bed, was a woman. That she had been, at no very distant time, more than commonly beautiful, was evident. Young, her features regular, her hair long and glossy.

But there was a wild, scared look upon her face and large dark eyes as she shrank tremblingly back from the stern gaze that was fixed upon her. As she moved, there came the harsh clank of iron chains, fastened around her waist and then to the wall.

"Mercy, Angus—have mercy on your poor wife!" she gasped, stretching her hands appealingly toward him.

"Still that old strain," he cried, impatiently. "Will you never be convinced? I tell you that you are not my wife—that I never married you!"

"Angus, why do you say that? We were married—I knew the minister. He was an old family friend. Then why do you deny me?"

"He is dead. The only other witness besides old Agatha is dead. Thus—even admitting that it was legal, which I deny and can prove—how can you prove it?" coldly sneered the man.

"Angus, you are jesting—you do not mean this—you will not deny your wife?" A cold laugh was his only reply.

"Angus, my husband, think what you do. I am your wife. I ask you by the memory of the time gone by to abandon this foul scheme. We were happy once—we may be again if you will only listen to reason. I loved you dearly then—I will still if you free me and love me as you did when we first met. I will never betray you. We will go far away from here, to a country where we are not known, and begin life anew. Angus—husband—do not look so coldly upon me! Your eyes pierce my heart and make me shudder. I am afraid of you now, when you look like that!" murmured the woman, as she shrank back still further.

"Alice," said Claiborne, and his voice sounded harsh and grating: "you rave and know not what you say. The past is dead, and better for you that it is so. You shall never leave this room alive, unless you consent to what I asked of you. Give me up that paper—the certificate of your marriage, and you may go where you will."

"If the ceremony was a farce, as you say, what good can the paper do you?"

"It will keep you from making trouble. Without that, no one would listen to you, nor would dare to make a stir in the matter. With it you might find some one fool enough to believe your story, and I don't wish my name talked about; just now, especially."

"Just now?"

"Yes. I am to be married, and—"

"Married? You are married! I am your wife, and while I live—"

"You do not live, except in this room. You died in Italy. Your grave is there, marked with an elegant tombstone, erected by a sorrowing husband," sneered the man.

"Angus!"

"This true. You were in my way. I did not like to shed blood, and you were obstinate. So I gave out that you were dead. No one saw you brought here. No one but myself and old Agatha knows that you are here now."

"But this must be soon. I told you I was about to be married. So I am—to a lady whom I love far better than I ever did you. Even if I did not, she has money enough to make it an object. We will be married to-morrow evening at Grace Church, and start at once for the Continent."

"I have left orders that you should be cared for. Agatha will attend to that. I furnished her plenty of money, and there are insane asylums here as well as in England, that are discreetly kept, and whose owners ask no troublesome questions as long as they are well paid. You will be entered as Agatha's daughter, and kept where you can never trouble me."

"This is what will be done, unless you think better of it, and give me that paper. Then, as soon as we are gone, you may go your way in peace. Will you consent? It will be better for us both, perhaps."

"Never! I know you now! The scales have fallen from my eyes and I see you in your true colors—cold, merciless, cold-blooded schemer. But I will foil you—if it costs me my life I will foil you and expose you to the world! You can never find the paper—it is in a safe place, and will be brought up to foil your plans. You may triumph for a while, but the reward will come, sooner or later."

"You rave, Alice. You are in my power and can do nothing. It will soon be too late. Better reflect. I give you one more chance. Which do you choose?"

"I have told you," was the firm reply.

"So be it, then. You have only yourself to blame. It is not likely you will ever see me again, as this may be my last visit here. My wife—ha! ha!—I salute you!" laughed Claiborne, as he turned to leave the room.

The door clanged heavily behind him, and the eyes of the terribly-wronged wife drooped to the floor. Suddenly a bright light overspread her pale and haggard features. A gleam of hope presented itself.

There, upon the floor where he had stood, lay a small key of a peculiar pattern. A second glance showed her that it was indeed the one that unlocked the chain that bound her.

She sprang forward to secure it, forgetting her situation for the moment. With a metallic clangor the chain straightened out, and she fell heavily to the floor. The key was just beyond her reach.

In vain she struggled and strained her arms. When fully extended, the coveted article was two feet beyond them. For a moment Alice despaired.

To see freedom so nigh, and yet so distant, was bitter indeed. It secured freedom, although even then she would be a captive. She well knew that no strength of hers could force the door or window.

Help from old Agatha she could not expect. The hag was faithful to her foster-son. But still, the chain once loosened, Alice believed she could escape.

For a moment she lay in apathetic despair. Then her face lightened with renewed hope. She arose and grasped a blanket from the bed.

Doubling this, the prisoner cast it over the key, still retaining the ends. Twice she did this, and each time brought the key a trifle closer. Then, with a wild cry of joy, Alice grasped it, and the next moment the iron girdle fell from her waist.

Seemingly gifted with supernatural strength, she wrenched the chair apart and secured one heavy leg. Her arm nerved by despair, this would prove a terrible weapon.

Then she waited. Hour after hour rolled on, and still the old woman did not appear. The night wearily passed away, and Alice still waited and watched, crouching beside the door, the club still in her hand.

Still the minutes rolled into hours, without result. The sun crept slowly around to the west, and Alice could see it sink behind the hills. Would she never come? And that evening the wedding was to take place!

Then the stairs without creaked under the slow, heavy tread of the janitress. Alice crouched still closer and grasped her weapon afresh. The key grated in the lock and the door swung open. The wife sprang forward with a low cry and dealt the woman a fearful blow with the chair-leg. A low

moan—a heavy fall—and the road was free to the wronged wife!

Bareheaded she left the house, one hand clasping the precious paper in her bosom, and sped swiftly through the dark streets. A short time brought her in view of the church. It was lighted up, and a crowd of carriages were ranged before the building. Was she too late?

Alice Claiborne rushed through the crowd and entered the church. A man would have stopped her, but she pushed past him, and then stood in the full glare of the room.

Angus Claiborne—her husband—stood before the altar, hand in hand with a beautiful, proud-looking young lady. The minister was reading the marriage service.

Then came the cry, and all stood aghast. What Alice said she never knew. She remembered showing her marriage-certificate, and then came a confused uproar and struggle.

A pistol-shot—a shrill yell of death-agony, as Angus Claiborne fell to the floor, dead—a suicide.

Then came a painful blank. Alice finally recovered her consciousness, and found herself at home with her parents. She had been recognized, despite her changed looks and reported death. The matter was hushed up, and the real truth was known to but very few.

The wronged wife still lives, but that is about all. Her reason was seriously affected by the dreadful trials she had undergone, and she was never entirely herself again.

Cora's Revengeful Lover.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"By the memory of your rejection of my suit, I swear to be revenged, proud, fearless woman that you think you are."

Albert De Vigne's black eyes were looking the enraged vengeance he felt, and Cora Rainer's face grew more haughty in its derisive beauty; and her eyes flashed a fire that equaled the flame in his own.

Then she smiled, calmly, even amusedly.

How perfectly ridiculous, Mr. De Vigne! As if because a lady thinks best to refuse to become your wife, she must needs be threatened therefor! Why, you surely have forgotten we are living very near to New York city, and in the year of grace 1871!"

"Neither of which facts shall deter me

from making you realize that I will not be trifled with, with the impunity you seem to think. I tell you, Cora Rainer, you'll be sorry for this day's work—you'll rue it, and that too before a fortnight rolls over your head."

His sudden tempest of passionate utterance had subsided into a quiet, terrible earnestness, that, with the pale, compressed look around his lips, made the girl wonder, for a minute, with a vague sort of fear, if it was true what he said. She would have asked him, but at that moment he caught up his hat, and walked rapidly out the door, that stood wide open, that warm, bright Easter Monday. She very naturally watched him out of sight, her rare, bright-blue eyes taking on a slight expression of puzzlement, not a little of amazement.

She made an unconsciously pretty picture as she stood there in the doorway, her light round figure bending gracefully forward and the long skirt of her blue silk dress lying in heavy folds around her. Her fair hair, brushed off her forehead *en Pompadour*, fell in a thick, half-curling mass at the back of her shapely head, and now, as the April zephyrs lifted the golden tresses, they were wafted wind-blown over her pink-tinted cheeks and white neck.

She was altogether passing fair, and as Roy Davenal watched her from the library, whither he had caught a glimpse of Mr. De Vigne as he strode hastily past, he felt a strange aching at his heart that this Albert De Vigne, with his handsome black eyes and jetty blackness of hair, his courtly ways and winning smiles, would win and wear the fair, golden-haired girl whose blue eyes held all his heaven, in whose low, pure laugh he took in the sweetest melody earth could offer.

So he sat, watching her as she watched De Vigne, never dreaming she had but just refused his offer of marriage, at first kindly, though firmly, then indignantly, when her suitor attempted to coerce her by persuasions that were angry, and threats that were cruel.

After a moment Cora came in from the doorway, wondering if Albert De Vigne would dare prove his words, and wishing, 'way, way down in her coy little heart, yet with an intensity that sent the carnation to her cheeks, that it had been Mr. Davenal who had made her the offer. But then—and a little sigh floated between the parted pomegranate lips—Mr. Davenal didn't care for her!

Judge Rainer extended his hand cordially, while Davenal bowed.

"Very fine, very fine, although I am free to confess I had not thought of it. I am on my way to bid Miss Rainer adieu, as I leave for Australia to-morrow at ten."

"Australia! you don't say so! Why, isn't it rather sudden?"

"Very. I received a letter only this morning. I will find Miss Cora at home?"

"I think not, unless she has returned since we came out. The fact is, we are out to meet her."

De Vigne's face expressed disappointment, and he drew out his watch hurriedly.

"That is too bad, for me at least, for I wished to see your daughter before I went away. But you will explain it to her, and give her my kindest regards. I am anxious to catch the 6.45 train down, in order to make some necessary purchases, or I would wait."

Then, with adieu, he went on again, and they never saw him afterward.

With a happier heart than he had known for a long while, Roy Davenal walked along toward the cemetery.

Under the flushing sunset sky, the father and lover walked—and then, Judge Rainer uttered an involuntary exclamation.

"What's that? Heavens! Roy, what does this mean?"

He had suddenly paused by his wife's grave, where the half-planted flowers, the trowel lying where Cora had dashed it in her fright, the disturbed ground, the trodden-down grass, all mutely suggested—what?

A frightened, bewildered pallor gathered on the old man's face, and he turned helplessly to Davenal, who stood, frowning and intensely thoughtful, at the grave. Then, before either spoke, there came a quick, soul-harrowing scream, as if near by, and still as if a long distance off; then another, that curdled their blood as they listened.

"My God! Davenal, what is it—what is it?"

Then came, clear and piercing, his name.

"R-o-y—R-o-y! help! help!"

Rigid as a statue the lover stood, his eyes keenly searching the adjacent grounds, while Judge Rainer shivered and quivered like a man stricken with the palsy.

Suddenly Roy sprang forward; he sprang over the graves, crushing down the flowers under his heavy tread; and, with all the impetus of his speed, and the force of his strong body, he threw himself against the door of the vault, that crashed—and opened, while a ghastly figure, with distended, spell-

cruel grasp, till the tiny, narrow, golden bracelets cut into her tender flesh.

"Cora Rainer, I say, you are not going to escape me. You either swear, over your mother's grave, to marry me, or I swear to—well, I will have my revenge, and you'll never see home again."

A low, pitiful scream came from her lips.

"No—no, Mr. De Vigne, you will not, you dare not! My sainted mother, whose spirit hovers here, will surely keep me from your cruel hands!"

"Then you refuse?"

He bent down till his hot breath flamed over her cheeks, and his voice was hoarse and merciless.

"I can not marry, you—oh! for God's sake don't, Mr. De—"

The wild ejaculation came leaping from her lips, for she had seen a moist handkerchief come from his vest pocket, in a square box that he dashed to the ground. Its cold, wet surface touched her face, and then—

Mr. De Vigne quickly lifted her from the grass, and a half-dozen steps brought him to the one vault of the little cemetery.

He rushed in, laid Cora's unconscious form on the dark, mouldy floor, and then, with wild eyes and ghastly lips, drew to the heavy oaken door that he had been hours unfastening in the darkness of the night preceding, and from where he had seen Cora enter that afternoon.

It closed with a horrible snap; and Albert De Vigne walked leisurely away—a devil in his eyes, ten thousand in his heart.

"It is something unusual for Cora to be away at this hour."

And Judge Rainer consulted his watch for the half-dozen time since the old hall clock had struck six.

Then he walked to the door and looked down the village street.

"Did she mention where she was going, Davenal?"

Roy remembered too well; and also that she had refused to let him go, too.

"To the cemetery, sir, with some plants for Mrs. Rainer's grave. Suppose we walk down and meet her?"

"I will, for truth to tell I don't know what to make of this freak of hers, staying out at supper-time. She never did it before that I remember, without telling me. Hallo, there comes De Vigne. A fine evening, Mr. De Vigne."

bound eyes, and blue lips, where a ghastly froth was oozing forth, darted into his arms with a convulsive scream.

It was two weeks after that—when the late May roses had dropped their petals—before Cora had recovered from the nervous fever that threatened her precious life; and then, when health had returned, there remained a brooding fear in her sweet eyes that life never can efface, not even the happy life she knows she will lead as the wife of him who loves her, and who saved her from a fate she dare not think about.

Roy Davenal is all and in all to her, and in his tender affection she will try to drown the memory of Albert De Vigne's vengeance.

Up in the Clouds.

A THRILLING STORY.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

"Well, Heber, what say you to a jaunt above the stars this delightful autumn night?" and the speaker quietly resumed his "Yaga," and sent a wreath of white smoke heavenward, managing, at the same time, to bestow a look upon his companion.

"Above the stars?"

"Well, not exactly," returned the other, smiling. "Did I say the stars? Yes? I meant, of course, the clouds. Come, now, boy, and reply to my interrogation, as amended."

"To tell the truth, Granville," answered Heber Ditson, "I scarce know what to say; and yet I do not wish to decline your kindness."

"An engagement, then?"

"A sort of one."

"With Ollie? Do not disturb the sweet little creature to-night, Hebe. You know you are to be married next week. She will get enough of you then, and *vice versa*. Come, make up your mind for the little aerial trip I propose."

"Yes, I'll go, if for nothing else than to please you, Gran. Is the Sky-bird ready?"

"Nearly so," said Granville Fortney, exhibiting great pleasure at his chum's decision. "I can put her in trim in a few minutes. Right wheel! Hebe, you'd make a poor soldier."

The friends laughed as they turned into a street which terminated in the eastern suburbs of Wellsburg.

A short walk, during which a lively conversation was maintained, brought the twain to an uncultivated lot, in the center of which might have been seen a beautiful little gas balloon, as taut as a well-manned sloop. The net-work was stretched to its utmost tension, and the aerial bird seemed eager to launch upon the atmospheric sea.

"I inflated the little bird before I sought you, Hebe," said Fortney, proceeding to prepare the balloon for departure. "I did not count upon your refusal, and you see I was right. I tell you, Hebe, I envy you the beautiful and inestimable jewel you are going to gain next Friday. You know, boy, that I loved Ollie Griffith once, and, by Jove! I love her still. To know her is to love her. The sweet angel! Why, Hebe, when she whispered, 'No,' to me, 'Will you become my bride, Ollie?' I was thunder-struck. My heart became still—a mass of icy steel in my breast—and I walked from the arbor, never uttering another word. And when I heard—as I did a few days after my rejection—that she loved you, I cried, 'God bless Hebe Ditson! Hebe, you will take good care of Ollie, if for nothing else than my sake.'"

"Indeed I will, Gran," said big-hearted Heber Ditson, something very like a big pearl glistening upon his cheek. "There! you are ready now, I suppose."

"Yes, jump in."

Heber obeyed, and saw his companion follow his example.

"One more jerk," said Granville, tugging at the rope which kept the balloon on terra firma. "There! Hold fast, Hebe! Now, up we go—like a rocket!"

It took the air vessel but a moment to penetrate the pure, strong atmosphere above the house-tops, and before the twain could suitably congratulate themselves upon their invigorating ride, the balloon was passing through the opaque clouds that prevented Luna and her companion worlds of brightness from showering their ambient light upon the earth.

All at once the balloon burst into the full blaze of the skyey spheres.

"How beautiful!" cried Fortney, gazing upon the indescribable celestial sight. "Look yonder, Hebe, at Polaris! Is she not the queen of the stars? Ha! my Sky-bird enters a current of southern air, and away we fly toward the North Star. Perhaps we can shoot a 'good-night' to the inhabitants. On, on, yet up, up. Isn't this delightful?"

"Up in a balloon, boys, up in a balloon, on a voyage of discovery—sailing round the moon."

An indescribable tone pervaded the sing of the voice; but young Ditson, knowing his companion's temperament, ascribed it to excitement.

Many minutes passed—perhaps thirty—and still the Skybird kept on in its upward path, with a rapidity that was astonishing.

Another quarter of an hour.

Still up, up—heavenward.

The atmosphere was contracting, and the cold compelled Heber Ditson to don his overcoat, remarking as he completed the operation:

"Gran, I think we have attained sufficient altitude. I should judge that we are twelve thousand feet above Wellsburg. I, therefore, counsel a descent, and suggest that we enjoy a smoke till dawn, in my study."

Fortney seemed to take no notice whatever of his chum's words.

"We have reached an altitude nearer fourteen thousand feet than twelve; but we are not going to stop till we reach Benetnasch. You see him yonder in the tail of Ursa Major. We are going straight to him now."

"Do descend to reason, Gran," said Heber, a gust of icy wind piercing his heart.

"Open the throttle. I'll freeze to death away up here, in a short time. Well, if you are determined to go to Benetnasch, I am not. I'll open the valve."

"You will not, sir!" cried Fortney, in an unnatural tone.

"What do you mean, Gran?" asked Heber, looking up into his face but half-revealed in the dim lantern light.

"That we are going to Benetnasch," was the mad reply. "Take your hand off that cord, or, by heaven! we'll have a funeral on the planet when we get there."

Heber saw a revolver leveled at his head, and sunk back with a groan. Then he saw a light in Fortney's eyes which he had seen in the orbs of maniacs confined within Mount Hope's walls.

"My God, he's mad!"

Those soul-chilling words bubbled to his colorless lips unsummoned.

Still up, up toward Benetnasch the planet. And before him stood the mad rival, with glaring eyes and leveled pistol.

It was a fearful situation.

At length an altitude of twenty thousand feet was attained.

Just think of it. Twenty thousand feet above the earth, and in a madman's power.

"Yes, we are going to Benetnasch," cried the maniac, fiendishly. "I'll leave you there, return alone, and marry Ollie. I've set my head on that, and all things present and those to come can not alter my determination. There goes our light! Well, let it go. A deputation will come down from Benetnasch, directly, with torches. Ha! ha! ha!"

Such a laugh! Pandemonium might produce its rival, which had never rent the air since the earliest dawn of light.

As the balloon rose the air became rarer, and at last it was so attenuated that respiration grew difficult. At length the least movement on the part of either of the men caused the aerial bird to oscillate and perform a waltz which could not end otherwise than in destruction.

Heber Ditson grew desperate as he thought over his fearful situation—of the sweet little creature thousands of feet below him.

He resolved to make a struggle for life. He felt that his safety depended upon his physical strength, which was superior to Fortney's in his sane moments. But what additional power the demon insanity had given him he knew not.

He began to rise.

"Down!" shouted the madman.

"I'm tired of sitting," said Ditson, calmly meeting the flash of the devilish eyes. "I'm going to Benetnasch with you, Gram. Look yonder. Is that not the planet's deputation?"

Ditson's finger pointed over the maniac's shoulder, and, completely thrown off his guard, Granville turned.

The next moment Heber had struck the weapon from his grasp, and it was falling down, down, through space, like a returning rocket.

The demon turned with a howl of rage, and threw himself upon Ditson. The young man shrank to the contest, and in that frail basket, far above the clouds, the fiercest struggle ever recorded took place.

The movements of the twin caused the balloon to perform tremendous circles in the thin air, like a madman in the wildest delirium of insanity.

Below them all was dark, while far above a million resplendent worlds contemplated the frightful scene.

Such a struggle could not last long.

Suddenly Heber's hand closed upon his mad antagonist's throat. He forced him to the edge of the basket, struggling still.

The next moment something dark, resembling a great ball, was falling down, down, everlastingly down!

Heber Ditson was the sole occupant of the fatal basket!

He staggered to the valve-cord, and managed to give it a few jerks before he sunk down insensible.

The aerial monster ceased to oscillate and began to descend. The descent was rapid, too rapid for safety; but the victor knew it not.

The next day some farmer found him twenty miles from Wellsburg, "bruised and wounded by the fall." His second escape was as miraculous as the first.

And, scarce a mile from where he lay, was found a shapeless mass of flesh and bone.

Poor Fortney! He never got to Benetnasch.

THE WINGED WHALE:

THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "SCARLET HAND," "HEART OF FIRE," "THE WOLF DEMON," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CAPTIVE.

WITH AN ANXIOUS BROW the commandante, Don Alvarado, paced the ramparts of the fort. Messenger after messenger had brought news of the near approach of the American army.

The Spanish commander had made all possible preparation for the attack, but, as he looked upon the little body of soldiers that composed his army, he fully realized that resistance was almost hopeless.

Many an anxious glance he cast seaward. He looked for the white sails of the coasting schooner, but saw them not. Then, as he looked toward the land, he beheld the advance guard of the American army.

Slowly the troops came on, until, at last, the lines of the besiegers, extending from beach to beach in a half-circle, completely surrounded the fort.

A bitter smile came over the swarthy face of the Spaniard as he surveyed the foe through a field-glass and noted they had no artillery.

"Without cannon they can not batter down my walls, and I'll hold the fort while a soldier remains," he muttered, as his gaze rested on the dark line that encircled the fortification.

"My guns will play havoc with them as they move over the level plain to the assault. By the saints! if it should be an Englishman, perhaps I may be able to give these Americans a lesson."

Then he leveled the glass at the strange craft.

"Her decks are full of men, and I can see the glitter of a brass piece amidstships," he murmured. "She flies no flag at her peak, and comes steadily on as if well acquainted with the harbor."

Long and carefully the Spaniard examined the stranger through the glass; a conviction forced itself into his mind, despite the pain the thought gave him.

"It is an American!" he muttered, in despair.

And then, as if in answer to his words, a flag was run up, and, as it lazily unfolded itself in the breeze, the banner of the Republic, the "Stars and Stripes," was displayed.

"Resistance is useless!" the commandante cried, in despair; "all my guns are *en barbette*. That brass piece amidstships is probably an eighteen-pounder, whose range is far greater than any of my own. He can lay off beyond the line of our fire and dismount my pieces one by one."

Then an officer, bearing a white flag, galloped forth from the line of the besieging army and approached the fort.

The American cruiser rounded to, let go her anchors, clewed up her sails, and opened her ports in warlike array.

The officer halted a short distance from the fort.

The commandante approached the edge of the rampart.

"Your business, senior?" the Spaniard asked.

"To see the commanding officer of this post."

"Why does the American General attack the city of a nation with which his republic is at peace?" demanded the commandante.

"I am not here, senior, to discuss political questions, but warlike ones," replied the officer, curtly. "I am instructed by General Jackson to inform you that, if you decline to surrender, our forces will open fire at once."

"Return to your commander; tell him that, in order to save the effusion of blood, I will surrender, but I protest against this unwarrantable outrage upon a neutral power," said the commandante, gravely.

The American officer simply bowed in reply, wheeled his horse and galloped back to the lines of his army.

With a sigh, Don Alvarado gave the order to lower the Spanish standard. Down came the proud banner of haughty Spain, and, as it slowly descended, another flag floated on the air from the privateer. It bore the symbol of a *Winged Whale*.

The commandante turned deathly pale as his eyes rested upon the strange emblem.

"The hand of fate is in this," he murmured. "Am I to be punished now for my early crime? The cup that fate has of late placed to my lips has been bitter indeed. Is it fated that I must drain it even to the bitter dregs?"

With a slow step the Spaniard descended from the ramparts to receive the victors.

The shades of night are once more falling over Pensacola.

In the little room of the inn where we have before visited her, Nanon sits.

The face of the beautiful girl is paler than it was wont to be. The heavy blue lines around her eyes tell of tears and of suffering. She looks five years older than she did when first she sought Pensacola, but a few days ago, in search of the man to whom she had given the love of her girlish heart.

The single candle burning on the table shed its faint light over the wan face of the suffering girl. The great tears were in her eyes as she thought of how wretched her fate had been.

The door opened suddenly and Baptiste entered. There was a strange look upon his stern features.

Nanon rose, her hands extended in anxiety.

"Estevan!" she cried. One thought only was in her heart—her lover.

"Sit down, Nanon," the Frenchman said, gently, a tender expression in his hoarse voice.

"You bring me bad news!" Nanon cried, her quick, womanly instincts reading the truth in the face of the man.

"Can you bear it?" he asked.

"Yes, anything is better than this suspense," she cried.

"Well, he is dead."

With a smothered cry, Nanon pressed her hands to her temple, and then fell heavily to the floor.

Baptiste knelt by her, in alarm.

"Oh, cursed idiot that I am!" he cried; "I have killed her! Mon Dieu! she must recover; she must live to forget this Spanish scoundrel, who was not worthy the love of such a woman as this girl is. I'd give ten years of my life if she would only love me half as well!"

Under the tender care of Baptiste, the girl soon recovered. A look of despair was on her face, but she listened calmly as Baptiste told the story of Estevan's death, all the particulars of which he had learned from one of the men of the privateer, who had been one of the boarding-party that followed Rupert to the deck of the schooner.

"And my father?" she questioned.

"It is all a lie. Lafitte is not in Pensacola. The man they arrested as Lafitte was this young sailor, Red Rupert, the captain of the Yankee privateer, the *Winged Whale*. I saw his vessel when she lay off New Orleans. The commandante denounced him as Lafitte that he might remove him from his son's way. And now, listen to another truth, Nanon; you are not the daughter of the pirate; I told you the story that the stigma of your birth might separate you from this Spaniard, who was unworthy of your love, and has played you false from the first. You are the daughter of an old shipmate of mine; he died and consigned you to my care. By a lucky streak of fortune I was enabled to leave the sea and I devoted myself to you. I tell you frankly I have deceived you, for Antoine Baptiste will be honest with you. I have learned to love the child that I have watched over since infancy. Let that love be my excuse."

"Baptiste, you have been a brother to me," Nanon said, slowly, taking the rough hand of the sailor between her own white palms; "can I ever pay you for all you have done for me?"

"Yes," cried the Frenchman, dropping on his knee by her side, encircling her waist with his arm and gazing up with eyes full of tender passion into her face.

"How?" she asked, looking into the earnest face of the man who knelt by her side.

"Let me be ever by your side, ready to guard you against all the evils of this world. I do not ask you to love me; let me still be your brother."

"Baptiste, I can only repay you in one way," she said, slowly and softly; "you shall be my husband. Give me one year to forget the man who now lies beneath the sea and then I am yours forever."

Gently, the sailor kissed the white brow of

the girl. From that hour their paths in life ran side by side. In time, Nanon forgot.

THE MYSTERY REVEALED.

WITHIN the room of the commandante, Don Alvarado, stood a group of three. The light from the burning candles fell upon anxious faces.

The commandante was leaning upon the chair from which he had arisen at the entrance of his visitors. The Spanish commander had been released on parole.

By the door stood the young sailor, Red Rupert, and by his side, his promised bride, the fair Isabel.

Through the open window could be seen the groups of palmetto trees, their leaves shining silver in the moonbeams.

The features of the Spaniard showed traces of deep emotion. Dark lines of care seamed the face, and despair cast its cloud over his brow.

"Pardon our intrusion, senior," Rupert said.

"You do not intrude; you are welcome, senior, and you, too, my daughter. For I feel that you are still my ward, although you have sought the protection of another," said the commandante, with stately courtesy.

"Forgive me!" and Isabel passed rapidly to the side of the cold Spaniard and laid her hand upon his shoulder. "I could not help the love that is in my heart."

"You are not to blame, poor child," the Spaniard said, affectionately. "I must blame myself, and one who has now gone far from earthly judgment. Freely I give you to the man you love, if my poor consent will make you one whit the happier. Senior," he turned to the sailor, "I have wronged you; I own it frankly, and I ask your pardon. But, one thing I swear to you: I never sought your life. When I caused you to be arrested as the pirate Lafitte, it was to prevent you from killing my son, Estevan, or he from killing you. I saw that there would be murder done if you were both at liberty."

"And now, senior," Rupert replied, "I believe you, and I have a favor to ask of your hands."

"A favor from me?" asked the Spaniard, with a searching glance into Rupert's face, as he spoke.

"Yes; listen to me. Some years ago there lived in this city of Pensacola a boy whose birth and parentage were a mystery. He was brought up by an old fisherman. When he was fourteen years of age he dared to force that he was almost a slave—for the red blood of the Indian mingled with the white drops in his veins, and all, save one, looked upon him as being little better than the black. He committed what was called a crime by the Spaniards. The lash repaid his fault. Smothering with shame he fled from the scene of his disgrace and vowed that he would never return until he had won a name, that even the proudest Spaniard would not dare to scoff at. Time passed on; the boy became a man; little by little, he fought his way upward, cheered by one hope alone. From the fore-castle he gained the quarter-deck. He won the commission of captain in the naval service of the United States. Then he returned to Pensacola, two objects in his mind; first, to win the girl whose face had been ever with him amid all his toils and dangers; second, to unravel the mystery that surrounded his birth. I am the man whose career from the fisherman's boy to the American captain I have traced. And now, senior commandante, I ask you, do you know aught of my parents?"

"Why do you put such a question to me?" the Spaniard asked, slowly, his gaze half-averted from the face of the sailor.

"Because your features are familiar to me; they recall memories of my childhood—of troops of dark-hued warriors standing round me; the red chiefs of the forest. I feel a presentiment that, in some way, you are connected with my early life," Rupert replied.

At a moment there was silence in the room. The commandante seemed struggling with many emotions. At last he spoke, slowly:

"Senior," he said, "if I speak, my words will revive painful memories that, for long years, I have striven to forget; but I will reveal all that I know. Years ago, a younger brother of a noble house in old Spain killed an opponent in a duel. The slain man was the son of one of the high officers of the government. The young man was obliged to fly for his life. In order to evade pursuit he enlisted as a common soldier in a battalion of foot, *en route* for the New World. He came here to Pensacola. Again his fiery temper led him astray. Another victim fell by his sword, and, hunted like the wolf, he fled to the shelter of the forest and sought refuge with the Indians of the Appalachian tribe. Chance favored him here. The great medicine-man of the tribe was a white sailor who had been shipwrecked on the coast. The savages saved his life, and he, being without kith or kin in the world, became one of them. Naturally shrewd, the sailor soon persuaded the untutored red-men that he was possessed of superhuman powers. On his breast was graven a strange device—sailor-fashion—which he declared was the totem of the Great Spirit. The mark was a huge Winged Whale. The Indians called him 'The man-with-the-flying-fish,' and revered him as an agent of the Great Spirit."

"And in the white Indian, the Spanish soldier found a friend. Then again fortune favored him; a beautiful young girl, the flower of the Appalachian nation, loved the white stranger, became his wife. A son was born to the soldier. The medicine-man charmed it from all danger by placing on its baby breast a Winged Whale, like unto the mark he bore."

"Two years only the soldier lived with the tribe, for then a Spaniard sought him in the forest with strange news from Spain. The soldier's elder brother had died; the ailing against him had been removed, and wealth and honor waited for him in Spain. He deserted his wife and babe and returned to his native land."

"I then am the child of this soldier, for I bear upon my breast the mark of a Winged Whale!" exclaimed Rupert. "But my father?" he asked; "his name, and does he live?"

"He was called Steel-arm, and he is dead," replied the commandante, slowly.

"The white man lies!" said a deep, guttural voice, and through the open window the old Indian chief bowed, nimbly, into the room.

The commandante started in terror, and his face became deadly pale.

"O-tee-hee was once a great chief of the Appalachian nation; he was the brother of

Lupah, the flower of the tribe. He gave her to the false white man who ran back to his wigwams across the big salt lake. The red squaw died—her heart shattered as the forked light shatters the oak. Thered chief took the child of the false white man and gave it to the dwellers in the big wigwams here. He said he would kill the white chief when he met him, but now he spits at him in contempt. Young brave, you are the child of Lupah; there stands your father!"

With outstretched finger, the chief pointed to the commandante, who sunk speechless into a chair. Rupert and Isabel looked on in amazement, hardly able to believe their hearing.

A moment the Indian looked at the Spaniard cowering beneath the fire of his eyes, and then he bounded through the window and disappeared.

"Heaven forgive me for the crime I have committed!" cried the Spaniard, wildly. "The Indian has spoken the truth, I am thy father; Estevan was thy half-brother. I strove to do all in my power to keep you from injuring each other. I favored him, I know, for he, though the youngest born, was dearer to my heart than you, the child that I deserted in infancy. Rupert, can you forgive your guilty father?" The commandante, rising, approached the soldier with outstretched hands.

As the Spaniard stood in the center of the room, something whizzed through the window. With a hollow groan, the commandante fell forward on his face, an Indian arrow driven through his body.

The commandante strove to speak, but the blood gushed from his mouth and choked his utterance. A movement more and the Spaniard had gone to his long home.

The Appalachian chief had kept his vow.

History tells us how Spain finally relinquished Pensacola to the United States.

Rupert and Isabel were married. In their New England home they forgot the dangers of the past.

Honest Decius Andrews, in the town of Salem, became the happy possessor of a buxom Yankee wife; and, in the course of years, a half-dozen tow-headed olive-branches played around his knee. In the long winter nights he opens their blue eyes with wonder, as he tells them of the terrible water-demon that a shrewd Yankee skipper constructed in a far-off Southern bayou, and how the armed foe fled in terror from the awful monster, the Winged Whale.

THE END.

The Death Struggle.

A LEGEND OF HUNTER'S COVE.

BY C. D. CLARK.

A STRANGE spot it was. A cleft in the wall of rock rising on the shore, running back a hundred yards, into the depths of a silent wood. A dark, sluggish stream, creeping in from the swamps to the south, emptied its waters into the cove. Deep shadows always lay upon it, and it seemed a fit place for the performance of dark deeds.

And Hunter's Cove had a history which was told me by one who knew all the tales of forest life about the place from the olden time until now.

Years ago, when Newtown was in its infancy, in fact a mere trading-post, two officers of the garrison were mad for the love of a beautiful girl, the daughter of another officer. She favored one more than the other, and that other, a dark, revengeful man, plotted how he could be avenged upon her, and upon her lover. Lieutenant Norwood, the young officer who was the favored lover of Mildred Olney, was a young man of rare promise, admired by every one, as much as Hunter, his rival, was detested. There had been no open rupture, for Captain Hunter was too good a tactician to press an injury until it was fully ripe; so he watched and waited, confident that a time would come; and it did.

One day they were at the mess-table and were drinking wine. Captain Hunter lifted a glass, full to the brim, and so that another drop would have caused it to overturn. He had a steady hand, for he repeatedly raised and lowered it, preserving an unruffled surface.

"One needs nerve to do that," he said, with a dark smile.

"Indeed, you are right," replied a captain near him. "And you have it."

"I was about to propose a health, which I am sure you will not refuse to do honor to," said Hunter, setting down his glass without tasting it. "Miss Mildred Olney, my affianced wife."

"I drink the first part of the toast," said Lieutenant Norwood, draining his glass. "But, the last part is a creation of your too fertile brain, Captain Hunter."

"Ah," said the captain, coolly. "In other words, I have lied."

"If you care to put it in that way, you may do so," replied Norwood. "I did not intend to have it understood that way. I mean that you labor under a mistake."

"I repeat my assertion. What do you say to it now?"

"I say it is false," replied Norwood, quietly.

Hunter seized his glass and dashed the contents into the young man's face, who replied by knocking him down. The affair marched rapidly after that. Hunter sent a challenge, and it was agreed that they should meet without seconds, in the gloomy glen beside the cove. It was also agreed that neither should mention the affair to others.

Mildred met her lover that day, and they walked beside the lake. She saw that he was abstracted, and answered her at random. At last they reached a quiet place, where they would be free from interruption, and sat down together. He did not know how the battle of to-morrow might end. Perhaps they would find him in the cold, gray morning, lying on his back beside the cove, stiff and stark.

"Why are you so sad, Egbert?" she said.

"Am I sad?" he replied. "I did not know it. I want to say something to you, Mildred. I am going on an expedition to-morrow, and it is full of danger. I may fall; and if I do, I must ask you to promise me one thing."

"Fall? You must not go."

"I must. And you must not speak of it to any one, no matter who. If all goes well, I shall return by noon. If not, you will know that I am gone. I want you to promise never, under any circumstances, to marry Captain Hunter."

"Marry him? I do not like him, and his dark face troubles me. I wish he would go away. What do you mean to do? Where are you going? I can not understand this."

"Nor can I answer your questions," replied Norwood.

He meant to make the young man angry and succeeded. When they crossed swords again he was cool and composed, while Norwood was flurried and heated. In three passes the point of Hunter's sword passed through the left arm of his young antagonist, and the captain smiled. Norwood saw that if he won he must keep his temper, and determined that nothing should move him to anger again. He again assumed the defensive, and allowed the other to attack, which he was loth to do. "I took care of that," he said, parrying a thrust. "If I fall, Mildred will never marry you. Be sure of that. She detests you."

It was the captain's turn to be angry. He closed with his youthful antagonist, and fell back with a cut upon the thigh, laying it open to the bone. He knew that with such a wound as that he could not stand up long, and closed again. The strife became deadly, and in the midst of it they were startled by a shriek, and Mildred stood before them. She had obtained Norwood's letter from the servant by an artifice, and opened it. Her sudden appearance startled the young man, and he stepped back hastily, falling, at length, upon the ground. Uttering a cry of triumph, Hunter raised his blade to dispatch his enemy. At that moment came a rushing sound, and a heavy body dropped upon the captain's head, felling him to the ground. Norwood started up and seized his gun, for there, crouching upon the body of Hunter, was that terror of the American woods, the panther. Norwood raised his rifle and fired. The brute gave a convulsive bound and dropped at the feet of his destroyer, dead.

They ran to raise the fallen man, and found him dying. A struggle, a gasp, and Charles Hunter was no more. Since that day the grass has grown rank upon the spot where they made his grave, and the owls and bats make their home about the gloomy place. The story was handed down from generation to generation among the children, and grandchild of Egbert Norwood and Mildred, and from the lips of one of these I heard the tale.

THE AVENGING ANGELS:

OR, THE BANDIT BROTHERS OF THE SCIOTO.

A BORDER AND INDIAN TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SILENT HUNTER," "QUEEN OF THE WOODS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A FEARFUL END.

WHEN Kenewa parted from his friend and brother in arms, the scout, he took his way toward the lake, where, however, he did not meet with as much success as he could have wished. He shot two turkeys, and these with bow and arrows, after which he retraced his steps upward, hoping to meet Steve. He was not long in finding the spot where the brave Kentuckian had left his game, with which on his discovery, the red-skin loaded himself, and then returned to his companions, fully convinced that by doing so he was consulting the general interests, and leaving Steve to come after as best he might.

The Avengers indeed were in want of food, for when Kenewa returned they were beginning to endure the full horrors of genuine starvation. A good part of the night was spent in feasting, and then all retired to rest, not very anxious about Steve, whose ways were ever uncertain, but still desirous for his return, if only to hear the news.

Kenewa, however, was more practical, and as soon as he had sufficient rest to qualify himself for a good journey, he shouldered his rifle and glided once more from amidst his companions to search for the scout. In his own mind he believed him to be on the track of the Bandits of the Scioto, in which case he would probably require his support and counsel.

The Huron warrior had during his journey seen sufficient "signs" of the robbers to guess pretty well where to find them. The vagabonds, who appeared loth to venture on the Shawnee village while the war-

pled Norwood. "I go out alone. My servant has a letter, which he will give you at noon to-morrow, and it will explain all."

She said no more, for a heavy step sounded on the shore, and Captain Hunter passed by. His face looked more gloomy than ever, and he sent a fierce look at Norwood from under his heavy brows and went slowly on, gazing back at them in a way which made Mildred shudder. The lovers parted soon after, and she did not see him again that night. Early in the morning, Norwood took his gun and went out for a hunt. Half an hour after, Hunter followed him, and they met beside the stagnant pool where they were to fight.

"You have brought your sword, I hope," said Hunter. "Of course you understand that this is a duel to the death. We need not go through the formality of measuring our swords. You have your favorite weapon; I have mine."

"That is all right. Shall we set to at once? We are not likely to be interrupted here."

riors were there, had landed on the same side of the lake as that where the Avengers were concealed, skirted the edge, and descended toward a dense timber at the southern end of the lake, and in this direction Kenewa took his way.

His eyes were fixed upon the ground, upon the trail which the careless ruffians had left, and at length his patience was rewarded by a discovery of the spot on which they were camped. A dim light through the trees indicated the position.

They were assembled where a large spreading chestnut threw forth its aged arms over a small hillock. The spot was like the secret fastness of some wild animal, some beast of prey. It was guarded on one side by a small river, and on the other by a complicated screen of underwood, consisting principally of those luxuriantly platted vines which mark the upper American woodlands.

Here sat the ruffians, carousing. A small fire of brushwood had been kindled near the foot of the chestnut, and its blaze was sufficiently strong to throw a bright gleam of light on the motley crew. They had been broiling venison, late as the hour was: this Kenewa could tell by the odor. But now one and all were busily engaged in filling up cans with steaming hot whisky punch, which they ladled out from a kind of kettle that hung from three sticks over the fire.

The Huron saw that the ruffians were in for a carouse, and a smile of grim satisfaction passed over his dusky countenance as he thought how, when lying in the sodden sleep of the drunkard, he would crawl up, slay and scalp the whole lot, a feat in his eyes doubly glorious, as enabling him to claim the thanks of his fellow Hurons, and to possess himself of trophies of valor that did not often swing on the tent-pole of a Huron brave.

The four Bandits, whose backs were to him, were, when he crawled to within a dozen feet of the fire, watching Mike Horne, who, with the appetite of a wolf, was devouring sliced after slice of venison, as if he feared he should never eat another meal.

"Well, now," said Mo, "it is a sight to see a feller eat like that. Mike, you'll breed a famine!"

"You'd eat, too, if you'd have gone through as much as this child has to-day."

"Well, spit it out. Where did you see that beautiful scratches come from?" said Mo.

"Darn the she-devil's skin! I say," growled Mike, "thof I karn't help larring."

And he took a very large pull at the whisky can.

"Tell your story," said Mo.

"Well, yar it is. I was loadin' up the hill, dodging about to find if I could see a like-ly bit of a buck to shute, or one of them ramping red-skins to pop off, when, all of a sudden, if I didn't kin across the prettiest print of a moccasin in the sand of the pine barren as ever I see!"

"A gal?" said Mo.

"You're right, and a spanker, too!" said Mike.

"I followed her. She didn't walk very quick, so in about ten minutes I kin in sight of her, and cuss me, if it warn't that Martha gal of Judge Mason's!"

Mo frowned.

"Jist you wait a bit. Now I know'd as how she would be scared, so I crawls up to whar she was a-sittin' on a log, a-lookin' at her face in a bit of broken glass; thin I see'd, darn me, it warn't Martha at all!"

"Who was it?"

"A red-skin squaw dressed up in the white gal's furbelows," continued the ruffian.

"Well, I claps my hand on her shoulder and gives her a grip."

"Come along with me," says I.

"Pale-face thief!" she says, quite quiet.

"Now this put my dander up, and I plainly told her that I wanted a squaw, and she said she wouldn't have me. I ups and tells her she war mine and not to be foolish. She then got away a bit; but I was arter her, though she did run like a good 'un. Well, at last I overtook her, when, thunder and snakes, a fine idea struck me!"

"Out with it."

"Well, coming along, I picked up a knife belonging to that cussed Steve, the scout."

"Oh! oh!" cried the ruffians.

Kenewa breathed hard, and clutched his rifle.

"I know'd them Shawnees had their dander up about him, so what does I do, but drags the gal to where there war a pool and put her in it, arter which I sticks the darned nigger's knife right up to the hilt in her heart, and thar I leaves her."

"Then the Indians will suspect that long-shanks of a scout," said Moses, gravely.

"Yes."

"Well, if they don't, jist you keep out of their way, Master Mike; and if they don't roast you alive, my bully buff, don't say I said so."

"You gives a feller precious consolation," said Mike.

"Well, if you want to know my opinion, when yer want to do any thing with these red-mugged wood-scourers, leave their women alone—leastwise their gals."

Three of the Bandits now lay down to sleep, while the others prepared to watch.

Mike was too exhausted and weary, he having, as explained to the sentinel, hid in a bush, until he saw the scout come up and draw his knife from the body.

He then recounted the story of Steve's capture by the Indians, whom, in his exultation and triumph, he had followed to the very verge of their village. Then, tired and weary, he had made the best of his way to the camp.

To analyze the feelings of Kenewa—first, as regards the vile outrage and brutal murder of the girl, and then as the fate of his friend—was being developed—would be impossible. There was a wariness, the fearful passions that assailed his bosom, the storm of indignation and of rage which made his breast heave, his eyes glare, and his cheeks burn. For a moment his calm resolution, common sense and keen knowledge of the world forsook him, but only for a moment.

"Death to the murderous gang," he still vowed, "without a thought of mercy!" But his first resolve was to save Steve, whose perilous position he well understood. After a moment's consideration his mind was made up.

Selecting a spot for repose where he was safe from the observation of the five ruffians, the Huron lay down with a determination to sleep, in the case of a red-skin, seldom fails of being carried out.

It was some time in the morning ere he awoke, but though for a moment he gave a start, he soon saw that he had not lain too long.

The first blush of morn had fallen upon a strange and disordered scene indeed. The coarse and drunken wretches of the night before lay stretched on their beds of leaves. Their motley and ill-assorted weapons lay around in disarray; the skin and horns of a buck and fragments of raw flesh were cast about under the tree. The brushwood fire had burnt down to a heap of smoldering ashes, while even the sentry dozed heavily with his back to a tree.

Death hovered over their heads. But Kenewa controlled his almost ungovernable emotion.

By degrees all the ruffians awoke, and with splitting heads they went down to the bank of the stream to drink and to lave their burning brows. Then they returned to the bivouac, made up the fire, and began a meal very little affected in quantity by their odious carouse.

"It'll be jist as well to kip away from them nagurs of Shawnees for a day or two," said Mo.

"Why?"

"Their dander will be mighty apt to be up."

"Not it," said Mike, and he told them of the capture of Steve.

"Well, then, there's one of them cusses of Judge Mason's friends gone. I say, let's hunt up to them."

All agreed save Mike, who, saying he was over-tired and weary, proposed to lounge about the camp until their return, in the refined enjoyment of eating, drinking, and smoking.

The others agreed, and soon after the meal was over they took their guns, cast them on their shoulders, and crossing the stream, strolled along the lake to look for the trail of those relentless enemies they knew were upon their track, and who, undisturbed, would utterly upset all their plans for the recovery of their unfortunate prey.

Mike, after they had left him, sat down, coquetted with some more broiled venison, and then, having satisfied one of his appetites—the man was a mere collection of appetites—he filled a can of whisky, lit a pipe, and prepared to enjoy himself.

Now the Huron warrior, his rifle cast from him, nothing but a sharp knife in his belt, creeps onward toward his quarry, his eyes glancing, his body shining, and curled over his right arm the fearful and terrible lasso—that weapon dreaded equally by man and beast.

He crouches in the water like a panther; he whisks the rope in a handful of little circles, which diminish as they fly—now finally falling over the head of Mike, dashing his pipe from his mouth, and dragging him half throttled to the ground.

The ruffian struggled desperately—so much so that his eyes started from his head, his tongue protruded, and he presented every appearance of a man being hung.

The Huron at once tied his feet together with thongs, did the same to his arms, and then removed the running-knot of the lasso.

Mike gave a terrible groan as he saw the Indian draw his bright and glittering knife. Like every blustering bully in the wide world, he was a coward. The Indian looked at him with a demoniacal glance, took from a bough of the chestnut tree a rough coat with a hood, wrapped the Bandit in it, and securing him with knots and thongs almost impossible to be unfastened, he loosened his legs.

"Pale-face thief!" said Kenewa, coldly, speaking in English, "will you walk? Choose that I dig out your eyes with a knife and hang you by the heels on yonder tree, or will you walk?"

"I will walk, in course," growled the ruffian.

It was now morning, bright, beautiful morning; the dawn had long since passed, and the full glory of day was upon them. The sun shone out clearly and brilliantly, the tree-tops, from which the wind had already shaken out the rain, rustled freely to the more moderate breezes.

Kenewa urged his prisoner forward, having fully made him understand that instant death would be the penalty of resistance.

In this way they at length reached the confines of the prairie on which the village of the Shawnees was situated.

We have seen how Kenewa acted. In so doing his conduct was not wholly so rash as might have been expected, for there were but few Indians who did not respect the person of one who either entered their camp as an ambassador or envoy, or even under any circumstances in which he placed himself at the mercy of his foes.

Theanderigo and the whole of his braves, the execution being of course suspended, stood still and grave, awaiting an explanation of the others' arrival. Though they showed none of that outward curiosity which in all red-skin tribes is thought to be the province of women, yet there was not one eye but was fixed with real interest on the strange-looking creature which the Huron warrior was driving before him.

Steve's face would have been a study for a painter, so mingled were the different elements of surprise, vexation, and curiosity.

Close behind him, a deeply observant spectator, was Tom Smith.

Kenewa, now being within a few feet of the Shawnee warriors, dropped his blanket off his shoulder, and bowed gracefully to Theanderigo, whom he at once recognized as the great chief of the Shawnees.

"Is my brother hungry or footsore?" asked Black Hawk, with studied politeness; "if so, he is welcome."

"No," said Kenewa, sternly. "I am a Huron; my home is on the distant plains beyond the sun, and my feet have never yet been so weary as to seek the wigwam of an enemy."

"What brings my brother, then, and what strange animal is that wrapped in a cloak?" continued the Shawnee.

"Kenewa, the great war-chief of the Hurons, has a friend; a little bird whispered in his ear that his friend was in danger; he found him bound to the pillar of death. What has he done?"

"The pale-face has slain a girl who belongs to our camp."

"Does he say so?" asked Kenewa, gravely.

"When does a man shout aloud his own crimes?" asked Theanderigo.

"Chief," said Steve, angrily, "you know that I didn't kill the girl—it's false!"

"How came the pale-face's knife in her heart?"

"It was my knife, Kenewa," said Steve, in a humble tone. "I dropped it near where the deer was skinned, and some dot-headed sounder picked it up and killed the poor gal."

"Kenewa has brought the murderer," said the Sioux, and with these words he drew off the cape, and exhibited the ruffianly visage of Mike Horne to view.

A loud murmur passed through the ranks of the Shawnees.

"Hullo, Theanderigo!" he said, addressing the Shawnee chief, "here we are. How are you? I'm pooty thirsty—my mouth's like a baker's oven. Ain't you got nothing to drink? Come, give us a drink, and cut these here infernal ropes."

No answer was made.

"Will my brother," said Black Hawk, courteously addressing the young Huron warrior, "explain why he thinks the Big Robber of the Scioto the assassin of the girl?"

Kenewa, in a brief narrative, told exactly what he had heard Mike relate to his brother.

"The tarnation villain!" cried Steve.

"Thunder!" cried Mike, on whose cadaverous and livid countenance a cold sweat broke out as he heard how, almost miraculously, his boasting confession had told against him.

"Untie the scout," said Theanderigo.

Steve in a moment more was loosened from his stake, so weak and stiff as to fall to the ground, where he remained some minutes ere his impeded circulation allowed him even to sit up with any comfort.

Kenewa having performed his duty, stepped on one side, leaving all the rest in the hands of the Shawnees, who, anxious to show their justice and honesty in presence of a renowned enemy, allowed both himself and friend ample freedom, though they themselves knew well that they were watched.

The spectacle that now awaited the Shawnees was one of peculiar interest. The physical strength, power, and daring of the Robber of the Scioto were well known; but there were those among the Shawnees who shrewdly believed that he would not act at the stake in the same calm and heroic way that had extracted so much admiration even from the enemies of Steve.

This state of excitement had a natural consequence.

Every man, woman and child was collected to see the wondrous sight, and the crowd was both dense and noisy in the extreme.

Martha stood silent for a minute or two on the edge of the multitude, and then silently moved away, as if unable to bear the sight of the expected torture.

Tom stood with folded arms, close to Steve, with his eyes fixed upon Mike.

Suddenly he stooped and whispered to the scout, who never moved a muscle, but showed at the same time his appreciation of the other's communications by a wink.

Kenewa, who was seated on the ground close to Steve, heard every word that passed. A momentary glow suffused his face, and that was all.

Tom Smith then sauntered away, as if he were a mere idler in the camp.

Mike Horne had now been bound to the stake where Steve had endured so much, and at a signal from Theanderigo he was stripped stark naked, not by the usual process of taking off his clothes, but by having them cut from under the thongs by knives.

It is not in our power to minutely describe the tortures now inflicted on the unhappy wretch. The cries of the agonized sufferer now became awful, and soon grew into the wildest shrieks of fear, mingled with groans, howls, broken prayers and execrations, now mingled with entreaties, now with cries of fierce and frantic command.

Steve alone shuddered. All the rest were unmoved.

So the executioners stood back, and the hideous spectacle of a man half-skinned alive and maimed in ways too hideous to describe was presented.

Then a pile arose, as if by magic, on the plain—a funeral pile—six feet wide and five high.

Again Theanderigo gave orders, and a part of the crowd giving way, eight girls appeared, with their long, dark, flowing tresses falling loosely over their bosoms, as they bore along on a litter the corpse of the murdered girl.

The bleeding, half-dying, tongueless wretch gave a wild and inarticulate howl, after which he closed his eyes, as if to shut out the horrid vision that, on the threshold of the grave appeared to haunt his dying moments.

He opened his eyes, however, when he felt himself unfastened from the stake and lifted in powerful hands, which deposited him ruthlessly on the funeral pile, beside his victim.

Though, without feet or hands, being nothing, in fact, but a bleeding trunk, the hideous wretch struggled to get away, but the savages bound him firmly, so that his cheek touched the cold, clammy flesh of the corpse.

A low howl, like that of a wild beast, was all the opposition he could make to this fearful act of retribution.

Then four torches were applied to the fagots, and a burst of flame and smoke indicated that the last scene of all was approaching.

The Indians stood around, awe-struck. This death and burial by fire was unusual with them, and only the hideous ferocity of the Bandit would have justified any of the chiefs in carrying out such a fearful punishment.

Not a sound was heard from the pile when once it was enveloped in flames. It was in charity to be hoped that the wretch was as insensible as his victim ere the dread element lapped him in its fiery and scorching embraces.

He had suffered already all that man could make him suffer.

Such was the fearful end of one of the Robbers of the Scioto.

CHAPTER XXIX.
THE FOREST FORT.

THE whole conclave dispersed to their several abode—the Huron and the scout being to all appearance free, though, in reality, many a watchful eye was upon them. The young warrior-chief fully intended attempting to escape, for he knew too well the character of Theanderigo to have any hope that he would act with any thing like honor or principle to one who was his hereditary and deadly foe.

Steve sat upon a log near the post which had witnessed his terrible trials, smoking his corn-cob pipe, in a state of such apparent beatitude as betokened an absence of all anxiety and fear. Kenewa, who was on the ground, leaning his back against the log on which Steve was sitting, busied himself mending a moccasin.

"The sun will have run its upward course in a few minutes," said Kenewa; "before it touches yonder pine we must be moving."

"Kenewa has brought the murderer," said the Sioux, and with these words he drew off the cape, and exhibited the ruffianly visage of Mike Horne to view.

A loud murmur passed through the ranks of the Shawnees.

"Hullo, Theanderigo!" he said, addressing the Shawnee chief, "here we are. How are you? I'm pooty thirsty—my mouth's like a baker's oven. Ain't you got nothing to drink? Come, give us a drink, and cut these here infernal ropes."

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"Untie the scout," said Theanderigo.

The scout philosophically thrust some more tobacco into his pipe, lifted his arms on high, and stretched them.

"Must we?" he said; "thin I reckon these yar legs can't run very far—they're darned stiff."

"My brother can see the river head from where he sits?"

"I reckon I can so," replied Steve, with a huge puff; "what then?"

"My brother will cast his eye where a sassafras bush grows under two dead pines," continued Kenewa, munching away at some dried Indian corn and jerked meat, which a squaw had given him.

"My eyes is riglarly fixed on 'em," was the scout's reply.

"The pale-face scout has long legs—let him run; Kenewa will turn to the hills; when the red-skin warrior says run, let him run truly."

At this moment of time a fearful hubbub arose at the extremity of the village, near the cavern where the more precious treasures of the tribe, including Matata and the white squaws, had been secreted.

"Them gals is off," said Steve, rising and standing erect and motionless.

The Shawnees are dogs—the Huron has thrown dust in their eyes," roared Kenewa, as the warriors came bounding up; and then, giving, with all the energy of which he was capable, his native war-whoop, he bounded for the forest-clad hills, right through the crowd of youths, women and children who attempted to stop him. In his right hand was a bright and glittering tomahawk, which hitherto he had succeeded in secreting.

Every thing that had life had been for some minutes hurrying to the center of the encampment; the men in one dense body, on making a discovery that nearly drove them mad; the women and children, the aged and infirm, anxious to play their part in the deep tragedy of revenge which they well knew must follow the event which had roused the warriors to such fearful and concentrated fury.

The prisoners had all escaped!

Kenewa, leaping with bounds that defied the efforts of old men, women or children to stop him, though half of them were armed with sticks, clubs or axes, whirled round every now and then upon one foot, his white and glimmering tomahawk being the outer rim of the circle. In this way he cleared a wide space for himself, while the warriors behind came hurrying up, with their fearful death-halloos.

All ideas were for a moment so bent upon the Huron chief, whose presence in the camp all connected with the abduction of their prisoners, that Steve, by sauntering on without any apparent motive, was able to go quite half-way to his destined goal without being discovered. He never once turned his head, well aware that, once he was discovered, he would have had ample warning of the fact from the throats of his noisy and angry pursuers. The terrible din above told him that the Huron warrior was still a free man, and hence his apparent calmness.

Sticks, stones, turf were recklessly thrown in the path of the young warrior, who, however, evaded them all with the activity and swiftness of the deer.

But now, right in his way, are seven youths, almost men, who, clutching each a club, stood right in the path where safety lies. To dash through them is in vain, as all are ready to clasp him in their nervous, though youthful arms, and the warriors are not ten paces behind.

Lifting himself by one of those superhuman efforts, which are almost magically given to men in such extremities, Kenewa bounded through the air, fell like a ball on the chest of one of the youths, sending him rolling many yards, and then was away like a stricken buck, toward the verge of the forest.

At this moment there came a volley of musketry that made the echoes of the hills awaken, and caused the Indians to stand still with open mouths, astounded at such a series of surprises and untoward events in one day.

Then, wounded, bleeding, and sullen, loading their guns as they came forth from the forest, appeared the four Bandits of the Scioto River, evidently retreating before victorious or superior numbers.

"Here's a pooty kettle of fish," said Mo, as he struck the ground with the stock of his rifle; "if there ain't that—old Judge Mason, and a lot more of 'em, a followed us right up yar, and from what I can make out, have sworn to scalp the lot of us, and then coted the gals!"

That oath they have carried out," replied Theanderigo, with a malignant scowl; "the two squaws of the pale-faces and the red daughters of the Hurons have fled."

As soon as Theanderigo had dispatched about twenty scouts to follow the trails of the different parties of fugitives, he seated himself in their midst and began his terrible narrative of the capture and execution of Mike, taking it up from the moment when the Shawnees made Steve, the scout, a prisoner.

The Bandits listened sullenly to the narrative until the arrival of Kenewa with his captive. This brought forth a torrent of curses and invectives.

Theanderigo continued his recital, with such details as were more calculated to irritate than to soothe the listeners. The motive of the chief was obvious. He was bound to these men by the bond of crime; he had solemnly undertaken to fairly divide the ransom to be obtained for Ella and Ette, or to restore those two unhappy girls to the Bandits. If, however, by harrowing the feelings of the four ruffians, he could rouse them to be the aggressors, then an excuse could easily be found for knocking them on the head, when the difficulty would be at an end.

But the Robbers of the Scioto were too cunning for him; they saw at once, on a hurried hint from Mo, through his shallow artifice, and determined not to be caught. When the cold-blooded ruffian entered into his most harrowing details, they laughed; when he described the last dying scene, they giggled.

"Served him jolly well right," said Mo, when Theanderigo concluded his narrative; "shouldn't go meddling with gals as didn't belong to him. Let's liquor."

But the Shawnee chief was not deceived; though one slight omission had been made by him; without noticing it, he revealed the names of the four torturers.

The Bandits treasured them up in their inmost souls, nursing their fierce wrath to keep it warm.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

THE manners which are neglected as small things are often those which decide men for or against you.

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SWAMP POETRY.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

The golden sun of noontide glids
The frog-pond's scum of green;
Enchanted bullfrogs dreaming sweet,
Sit in the mud serene.
Turtles, retired from busy life,
Sit on the logs in rows,
Scratching their ears with their hind feet,
And smiling in repose.

Translucent tadpoles, full of grace,
Go wigwagging through the mud,
In youthful innocence of heart,
And nobleness of blood.
And well-developed heads they have,
But it is very plain
They're likely to be troubled much
With water on the brain.

The lily's leaves they drift around
Like little ships adrift,
But with no fairy passenger
Save now and then a toad.
A snake puts out its head
To say—'How do you do?'
I'd like for more variety
To take a bite at you!"

A haunt for world-sick poets this—
For those who think they see
In ghostly places, dismal swamps,
Some hidden harmony.
For here all day upon a log
Like I they might recline,
And fill the world with poetry
Through such a song as mine.
And here how easy 'tis for one
To fall into a doze!
I feel my mind relaxing now,
And wraps upon my nose.
My drowsiness is not disturbed
By frog or pollywog,
And all my cares they roll away,
And I roll off the log.

The Patriot's Daughter.

A TRUE STORY OF THE WATAFEE.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"MOTHER, I commit her to your keeping. Watch over her with unceasing vigilance, and take her life without a moment's hesitation should you detect her in an attempt to escape."

After thus instructing the toothless virago who called him son, Burke Holdencraft, the Tory, clad in the flashy uniform of a commissioned dragoon, stepped to the door. Maggie Gleason, his beautiful prisoner, followed his example.

The next instant the hag clutched her arm, and drew back her crooked crutch in a threatening manner.

"Another step, my girl," she hissed, in discordant voice, "and I'll mark you for life. She shall not escape Burke," she continued, addressing her son. "Have no fears on that score. I will watch during the day, and Black Bess shall be with her through the night."

"Now see that you keep your word, mother, for, should I return to-morrow night, and find her missing, by Heaven! I'll kill you."

What! kill his mother? Already Burke Holdencraft was a fratricide; therefore, would you think him too scrupulous to add matricide to his many enormous crimes? Yes, he had taken the life of his patriot brother, who had enlisted in the little army of struggling freemen.

Flying to the British, his hands still reeking with his brother's blood, he was commissioned captain of a company of Tory dragoons, and soon made his name a terror to defenseless homes.

Nestling in the beautiful valley he swore to devastate, was the home of Maggie Gleason, who, at the outbreak of hostilities, spurned his unholy passion for the love of Roscoe Bentley, a brave soldier who rode to victory with "Light-horse Harry Lee." The ruffian smothered the rage occasioned by his rejection, and patiently bided his time.

At last it came. One night, like the night-hawk, he swooped down into the quiet valley, and summoned the Gleasons to their door with the crackling torch.

Maggie's father—a feeble widower—was roughly handled, and bound. Then the girl was secured, and, after ransacking the house, to which they applied the torch, the Tories rode away with their booty. Mr. Gleason was taken to the British camp, while Maggie found a jail in the shape of Burke Holdencraft's home, and his mother her relentless guardian.

The morning succeeding the brutal act the Tory took his departure, as the reader has seen, and Maggie was hustled into the only room the second story of the hut contained.

During the past night the Tory had greatly strengthened the apartment by nailing the window down. He might almost have spared himself the task, for it was beyond Maggie's reach, and her couch consisted of a pile of straw on the uneven floor.

The day passed wearily enough to the poor girl, and when night threw her somber pall over the world, Bess, the repulsive negress, took the hag's place, and became Maggie's companion in the attic.

The negress possessed no humane feelings. She would have strangled the patriot's daughter at a word from the Tory. She hated the Americans from the depths of her heart, for General Greene had convicted her ebullient husband of being a spy, and had him promptly executed.

The old-fashioned clock was striking eight when Burke Holdencraft returned.

The negress was dozing in one corner of the attic, and Maggie threw herself upon the straw to listen to the conversation progressing between mother and son.

"Well, mother," said Burke, in his loud voice, "to-morrow night our swords drink patriot blood."

"Good!" cried the heartless hag, clapping her skinny hands. "Where do you strike?"

"Among the Americans, beyond the mountain ridge. Our spies brought us the cheering information that a portion of Light-horse Harry's legion have encamped at the foot of the Giant Spur for a few days. They were sent to protect the valley, you know. But the best thing connected with the information is that the rebels are commanded by Roscoe Bentley. Fortune favors me. My brave fellows shall give no quarter. We shall pounce upon them at midnight, and, to-morrow, the rising sun shall behold a squadron of corpses. But, mother, I am completely fagged out. Do you, therefore, get me a bite, and I will go to bed."

Maggie heard the old woman rise and bustle about the room, preparing a night repast for her criminal son.

The information imparted by son to mother sent a nameless and indescribable chill to her heart. That her brave lover and his dragoons were in imminent danger was very manifest, and she resolved to make a desperate effort to save them, and, by doing so, save herself, as well, from an unenviable doom. She knew where the "Giant Spur" towered toward heaven. The road thither was long, but she knew every foot of it, and, well seated upon the back of a good horse, the distance would seem but a mile.

Presently the Tory finished his repast, and retired to a small chamber. A moment thereafter his mother extinguished the light, and followed his example.

Now for escape. The door was locked within, and strongly bolted without.

Escape in that direction was impossible. Maggie looked at the prostrate negress, and found her wrapped in deep slumber.

In one corner of the room lay the broken stock of a musket, still a cumbersome thing. The girl neared it by degrees, and, at last, clutched it with an inaudible ejaculation of joy. Then, with grimalkin steps, she approached the sleeping guard.

Suddenly the stock descended upon Bess' unprotected cranium, and she passed into the state of insensibility.

Then the patriot's daughter converted her strong linsey frock into cords, and bound the vanquished, taking care to secure her mouth.

Her attention then flitted to the window, which looked upon a shed in the rear of the hut. Discovering that her station prevented her from working to advantage, she rolled the negress beneath the window, and, mounting her, worked for life.

With the aid of the broken stock, she succeeded, after an hour's labor, in removing the fastenings, and gently removed the sash.

Stepping to the floor, she drew a pistol from Bess' bosom, descended to the ground, and glided toward the stable.

Two steeds, one of which was saddled and bridled, occupied the stalls. She led forth the one particularized, mounted him with agility, and galloped off in the moonlight.

Presently she struck the road terminating at the foot of the "Giant Spur," and urged the animal into a faster gait.

On, on she went, congratulating herself upon her escape; but her joy soon came to an abrupt pause.

The sound of approaching hoofs fell, with doleful distinctness, upon her ears, and, looking back, she beheld a single horseman rapidly nearing her! He was hatless and coatless; but a polished blade glittered in the moonlight.

Maggie knew that her pursuer was Burke Holdencraft. In her desperate efforts to free herself, after recovering consciousness, Black Bess relieved her mouth, and gave the alarm.

"I shall overtake her," said the Tory, springing toward the stable. "Having overheard our conversation, she rides toward the 'Spur.' As I expected," he cried, entering the structure, "she has taken Santee. He is nearly 'played,' while Chesapeake is a fresh horse."

He leaped upon the steed, armed with nothing but his saber, and darted off like a rocket.

Maggie soon discovered that her pursuer bestrode the freshest horse, and that, in due time, he would overtake her. But, nevertheless, she urged Santee on, and, quietly, yet with a determined expression, drew the pistol.

The midnight chase was an unequal one.

The Tory's horse rapidly lessened the distance between pursuer and pursued, and, at last, in thundering tones, Burke commanded the patriot girl to stand.

She paid no heed to the summons.

Nearer and nearer came the dragoon, until Chesapeake's bit touched Maggie's arm.

Then, with a startling suddenness, the girl turned half around in the saddle. The Tory saw her intention, and recoiled aghast, but too late.

A loud report reverberated among the mountains, and Burke Holdencraft's spirit was in another world!

The girl cast a look upon the bloody face, then gently drew rein, and proceeded more slowly.

At dawn she reached the patriot camp.

The following night the British and Tories marched to the attack, without Burke Holdencraft; but the patriot birds had flown.

And, with the dawn of dearly purchased peace, Maggie Gleason became Maggie Bentley.

How Folks Differ.—We chew tobacco, the Hindoo takes lime, while the Patagonian finds contentment in a bit of guano.

The children of this country delight in candy, those of Africa in rock salt. A Frenchman goes his length for fried frogs, while an Esquimaux Indian thinks a stewed candle the climax of dainties.

The South Sea Islanders differ from all these, their favorite dish being boiled clergyman or a roasted missionary.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Old Dave Burton and the Freebooters.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"Redpath's gang has been to work ag'in," said one of the rangers who had just come into camp.

"They hev, hey?" spoke up old Dave Burton, in a quick, sharp voice. "Well, an' whose fault is it? Whar's them soldiers that war to raise sech a bobbyer 'mong'em? They raise a bobbyer! They be—I! They don't know how to raise no bobbyer; an' I, fur one, are jess fur throwin' off this hyar trail we're on, an' lite out arter these cussed villains."

"Redpath's gang" were known all over the border as the very worst set of scoundrels that ever robbed a mail-coach or an emigrant train, and had, up to the present time, defied all efforts to capture or disperse them. It had only been a few weeks since they had utterly destroyed an emigrant train, murdering many of the people, running off all the stock, and burning what could not be carried away—wagons and all.

Although there was no man on the border who had seen more of adventures and hardships than the old ranger who had spoken, yet he rarely alluded to himself or his "experiences," preferring rather to tell what had happened to others.

Here was evidently a chance to draw him out, and I quietly remarked:

"There has been a good deal said about and against Redpath and his followers, but perhaps they are not—"

"You be durned," snapped old Dave, who caught at the conclusion of the sentence. "I tell you what it is, youngster; ef you'd a-fell into their grip, as I did, you wouldn't go makin' excuses fur no sech gang uv cut-throats. Not much, you wouldn't!"

"They captured you, did they?" was the reply. "And when you kin say as how you fell into the grip of Bill Redpath's gang, an' live to tell it—why, then you 'll hev the right to talk."

"Well, well, Dave, I didn't mean to defend the scoundrels," I replied. "But tell us how it was they came to gobble you, and you succeeded in getting away."

"I didn't get away a-tall; they got away, sartin es I'm done fur, an' then I got a-wishin' that one uv 'em'd come down an' cut my weezin, fur I war tired o' drawin' in the stinkin' air through it."

"Shore anuff, it warn't long arter that afore I hear tew uv 'em begin jawin'; an' then another feller he put in; an' then sum more; an' by-in-by, the whole lot, war cussin' one another, ekil to mad tom-cats on top'n a rail fence."

"You fellers es knows what kind o' chaps these imps ar' kin guess easy that they didn't stick to cussin' long. Purty soon I hear one uv 'em give the lie, an' then I heard 'em drap, heavy, an' though I listened powerful, he didn't get up es I could see."

Fur more'n a minit that war a perfect silence; then a pistol cracked, an' the fount war begun.

"I war jess awful, boyces, an' arter the infernal racket begin I kinder wished it hadn't, though I didn't keer much ef they rubbed ev'ry one uv theselves."

"The crack uv a pistol, or a rifle inside a room ar' a bad sound, it ar' dangerous allers, but when that's twenty uv 'em poppin' away, it doose git to be ugly, shore anuff."

"Sech yellin', an' cussin', an' yowlin', I don't never want to hear ag'in. An' then the groamin', an' ev'ry once in a while, a kind uv a hefty thump onto the floor, tellin' how some vill'n had gone under."

"I reckon the fount must a' lasted more'n a quarter, but it seemed to me, boyces, es ef it hed been goin' on all day."

"By-in-by, the rumpus begin to die out, on'y a shot now an' then, or a scuffle whar one uv 'em war hurt bad, an' war slashin' his arms an' legs 'round w' the pain."

"I hed begun to think the scrimmage war over, an' was about beginnin' to go thinkin' 'bout my own affairs, when I heard a shout that acterly froze me stiff whar I lay."

"It war one uv the runnegades yellin' fire es loud es he could, an' at the same minit I smelt burnin' timmer, an' purty strong at that."

"Thar war a mighty hustlin' uv feet, draggin' uv wounded an' dead outen the door, shoutin' this an' that, an' then all war still es a canyon in the big desert."

"Then kem a little cracklin' kind o' noise, an' this grow'd louder an' louder ev'ry minit, an' the smoke begin to fill the place, an' all at oncet, a sudden flash o' fire, whar the bleeze hed eat its way down through the floorin'."

"Most uv you, boyces, knows me. Rube an' Ike Bundy, thar, an' Ferd, hev sec'd me in a hundred places, the wust kind, an' I don't bleeve I war scart enny more'n com-

"I axed to see Bill Redpath, an' war told to shet up, es I'd be likely to see him soon enuff, an' w' that they pulled up a couple uv boards an' chucked me down a hole un'erneath. 'Twur a awful fall, an' fur a while I thort my head war bu'sted ennyhow."

"An' dark! Well, I reckon that place war dark sum! I could fairly ketch hold on it, it war so thick!"

"Now, boyces, this hyar, mebbey, don't look so bad as it mout 'a been. They mout 'a skelped me in the first place, an' all that, but I wish I may be evenly rubbed out by a digger injun, ef I didn't wish they hed a-finished me off jess thet a-way."

"Rope down a mountain-man, neck an' heels, an' chuck him into sech a place es thet war, an' I tell you, ef he don't want to die he's got a better backbone nor I hev. He wants free a'r, he wants to use his arms an' legs, he can't breathe, he can't jess do nothin' but lay an' think about the perrairy, an' the valleys, an' the mount'ins, an' them sort, till he gets es crazy es a mule-eared rabbit in airly spring."

"It war awful, an' thar I lay, jess as they hed throw'd me, fur four days an' nights. Eat? Not a claw uv nothin', but I didn't mind thet. I didn't even want it. All I did want war to get outen thet cussed hole. I could hear the durned runnegades uv 'bove, drinkin' an' cussin' an' cavortin' an' tellin' 'bout what they had did, but thar warn't nary one as pulled up them planks an' peeked down to see how I war gittin' along."

"They had put me thar to starve, and I war a-doin' it fast, though I didn't know it. 'It war the fifth day, es nigh es I could calkerlate, when the head imp uv 'em all, Bill Redpath, kem in. He'd been out spyin' in a train, I heard him say, an' he'd brought 'em a kag uv sperrits he hed stole sumwar. I dunno how it war, but, when I heard him tell 'em 'bout them sperrits, I kinder felt es ef it war a-goin' to hev somethin' to do w' my case. The idee kem like a flash—that's another word fur it, but—"

"Inspiration," I suggested.

"That's it, youngster—inspiration—an' war gone the next minit, an' I felt wuss'n ever."

"The way them cutthroats walked into them sperrits war a caution to snakes. It must a' been a hefty kag, fur they kep' it up all thet day, an' part uv the night, an' by thet time they hed begun to git cantankerous."

"Sez I to myself, thar'll be Ole Nick to pay 'mong them chaps afore long, jess es

mon in none on 'em; but, I tell yur, fellers, fair an' squar, thet when I see thet long streak uv fire pokin' down, an' likin' around jess like the tongue uv a black racer do, I willed an' howled like a wolloped cur."

"The bleeze grow'd bigger'n bigger, an' kem creepin' along the floor to where I lay, gettin' hotter'n' hotter, until my hair begin to siz, an' the hide to raise up in big blisters all over."

"I knowed es soon es the rafters war burnt through I war a goner, an' I watched 'em gettin' weak in places, an' sorter bendin' down like w' the weight on top, an' hilt my breath, whar thar war uv it, fur the last tussle."

"I hed given up all hope, an' a kind uv desprit feelin' war gittin' itself into me, when, all at oncet, I heard the crack uv rifles, an' the old, reg'lar whoop uv the rangers when they make thet charge."

"Warn't it musick! I guess! But, would the boyces re'ch me in time? Did they know I war down into thet hole? Them questions got me back, kinder, an' I turned over, w' my face ag'in the earth, an' tried to crawl."

"The fount didn't last long; an' then I heard the voice uv Jim, a-shoutin'."

"All together, boyces! An' the next minit the burnin' shanty war tumbled, floor an' all, down the hill."

"Hot es it war down thar, Jim an' half a dozen more le'p in, an' I war h'isted out, an' carried off to the crick."

"Fresh a'r, an' plenty uv it! Boyces, yur don't know how good it ar' till yur been doin' without it fur a spell. I thought I'd 'a' busted drawin' it in, an' when they fetched me water outen the crick, thar would 'a' been a case uv water founder ef Jim hedn't snatched the gourd."

"Well, the fellers hed hurt Bill Redpath's gang powerful bad, an' what w' them es hed been rubbed out in thet own foot, they counted seventeen karkidges next mornin'."

"'Twur a close shave. You see, Jim, when he got back, an' found I hedn't kin in, he puts fur the wally, an' got my trail to whar the durned runnegades hed roped me. He sez what war up, an' lit out for whar Duval's rangers war in camp, an' you better bleeve they kin in a hurry."

"Thet's why I hates Bill Redpath an' his gang, an' I hev swore ter get even, an' I'll do it afore I goes under."

Beat Time's Notes.

There is a good deal of science in a game of billiards. When I was a boy I was perfect in the game of marbles, and as there is not much difference between the two games, I knew full well that I could make a hand at billiards. It goes mostly on angles, and as I am a good angler, besides having a good eye for angles—being blessed with angular eyes—I challenged a friend and had my first game at billiards the other night. Please don't tell him it was my first, for he thought honestly that I was the man who first invented the game. You remember you have to punch the balls with poles. It was my first shot, but I didn't make the shot at all, for I missed it, having forgotten to chalk the cue, which I did on the wrong end; then I struck the ball, making a good shot of very long range—that is, it ranged off the table, and ranged clear to the other end of the room. Then I made a long run after it. The next time I went back to taw, chalked the ball, and made a home-run—that is to say, I went into the pocket. Indeed, those pockets are altogether unnecessary, and are mere pitfalls for the unwary. I was continually getting into them; indeed, I might say I was never out of pocket, and if that constitutes good playing (which I have reason to believe it does, as everybody would cry, "good shot!" every time I would go into them), I am certainly the best player that ever played billiards, or smash, either. The next shot I made would have been a good one, but I accidentally punched my friend in the commissary department with the butt end of my cue, and completely doubled him up—he was a single man before. He threatened to beat me—over the head with his cue. I didn't have to make very many shots; my friend was obliged to make the most, while I got to rest. The next time I shot I punched a hole in the cloth. The price of those variations of the game I was informed was ten dollars. I gave my watch and received the change. Then I dispensed with the cue, and rolled the billiards marble fashion. I could roll right through the balls in a huddle and never touch one of them. Everybody cried out, "Extraordinary!" Playing too near the bar, and looking at the balls rolling so much, caused me to go home light-headed. I made 001 points. In truth, I am old Bill Yards himself. I am ready for any man in the U. S. at one thousand dollars a game. I can beat anybody. I can Beat Time!

My ought-to-buy-ography, besides containing an interesting chapter on things which I have entirely forgotten, will also contain some excellent reasons why sickness ought to be prevented; a chapter on the genealogy of corns; an impartial account of my moral virtues, condensed into thirteen chapters; an unbiased account of the miserable meanness of my enemies; the reason why the moon, sun and stars stood still when I was born; besides containing two bushels of oats, one sewing machine, three grindstones, and a large piece of the Mammoth Cave.

It is no exaggeration for me to say that I have often laid my head on a table, and walked across the room and looked back at it; that I have given my friend my hand on his promising to return it to me in the morning; that I have stood on my own shoulders; carried myself in my vest-pocket like a watch for a week; got mad at myself and whipped me within an inch of my life, besides getting married.

LOVE letters are not the best things in the world to have lying around loose. A young lady friend of mine says she always puts hers in the family Bible; which speaks very well for the safety of the letters, but badly for the safety of the family.

If one Irishman named Pat can saw a stick of wood eight feet long, how long will it take him to saw it longer, providing he works right along?

How many lads does it take to make a ladder?

MANY editors have sharper scissors than wits.

Did you ever return the bow of a vessel?